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• STORIES OF A SANCTIFIED TOWN •
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STORIES OF A SANCTIFIED TOWN

STORIES
OF
A SANCTIFIED TOWN

BY
LUCY S. FURMAN
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THE CENTURY CO.
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TO
ROSALIE ALLAN COLLINS
MY AUNT AND DEAREST FRIEND

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THE STATION

N a certain part of Western Kentucky there is a small and obscure town, quite as unambitious and forlorn-looking as the usual country village. Its one long street, running at right angles to the railroad, is largely overgrown with weeds; along the sides of this street the unpretentious houses straggle. To all appearance there is nothing about the Station to distinguish it from any other sleeping country town.

But on entering its homes you are at once conscious of a peculiar atmosphere, a zest of spiritual life, that set it apart, and lend dignity and value to its existence.

Over the people of this small town, a few years since, swept a strong wave of religious enthusiasm, baptizing them with a strange

and new experience, redeeming their lives from the commonplace and the monotonous. This experience they have named “sanctification”; believing that the Holy Spirit enters into and fills their hearts, leaving no room therein for any evil to abide. And if to some persons this faith seems objectionable, be it said that the best answer is the daily life of many who profess it.

The Bible is their one book, newspaper, fashion-plate, almanac, and guide in all matters of soul and body. They know it from lid to lid; and if at times they dwell rather upon the letter than upon the spirit of its teachings, it is a fault of mind and not of heart.

Some of these good souls, grieving over the sins of the world, have felt impelled to go out on various missions and preach their gospel of salvation and gladness—for it is a gospel of both inward and outward rejoicing; others have remained at home, to make life more interesting at the Station.

STORIES OF A SANCTIFIED TOWN

STORIES OF A SANCTIFIED TOWN



BROTHER ROLLY'S DRAWBACK

IT was Saturday afternoon at The Station. A number of men sat out in the front porch of Bundy's Store, which was also the post-office. The two benches on each side of the door were filled with men, and several were balanced on the porch railing. Brother Rolly McKittrick occupied a goodly portion of one of the benches, his long legs, incased in brown jean trousers and calfskin boots, comfortably crossed. He presented a pleasing aspect, with his white hair and beard, ruddy skin, benevolent and inquiring eyes, and sturdy figure, somewhat bent at the shoulders.

“Well, gentlemen,” he was saying, in a mellow voice, “my experience in religion has certainly been funny. Mighty strange, I should call it. I know I’m saved, and that

my sins is forgive,—I got the assurance of justification,—but I don't seem to get no fur-ther. I 've got the peace of religion, but not the joy, so to speak,—saved, but not sancti-fied. Here I 've been seeking sanctification for two year, and ain't got any more 'n I had at first. Why, pretty near everybody in the Station 's been sanctified in that time but me. I 've kept up a sight of praying, and walking in the narrow path, and got all the preachers and saved a-praying for me, but look like it ain't no use. There 's bound to be a draw-back somewhere, I say. I asked Brother Cheatham about it last quarterly meeting, and he says: 'It 's faith you 're lacking, Brother Rolly. Keep a-praying for more faith.' But seem like I got the faith a plenty. Now I ain't got no doubt the Lord *could* sanctify me if he was a mind to. I 'm always looking for the blessing,—always getting, but never got. So I think there must be something else in the way. I wish somebody 'd tell me what it is! Now, I ain't a drinking man, and good-ness knows I never played no cards, and never swore but once, and that was when I was a little fellow six year old riding a stick horse, and he shied at a stump, and I cussed him.

That sounded so bad I never swore no more. I was brought up in the way I ought to go, and although I 've been a tolerable sinner, I ain't never been to say ornery. Now, I say the Lord's dealings with me is strange, for here I 've been seeking the blessing for two year, and seen worse sinners sanctified in two days. It 's a funny thing. There 's a drawback somewhere, Brother Jones."

During this time Brother Rolly had been turning over tenderly in his fingers a new plug of "Kentucky Orphan," with a shining silver band around it, and he now proceeded, with keen relish and much delicacy of touch, to slice off an end of it with his barlow knife. The slice, being satisfactorily square and straight-cut, was conveyed on the point of his knife to his mouth.

"I should say with Brother Cheatham that it was faith you was lacking, Brother Rolly," replied Brother Gilly Jones. "The grace is free to them that 's got the faith to lay hold of it."

Brother Jones was perched on the porch railing, and spat vigorously over to the other side of the porch to emphasize his remark. He was a thin, wiry little man, with pale-red

hair and chin-whiskers, much-wrinkled skin, and watery blue eyes.

A young boy, who, standing outside of the charmed circle, leaned inward over the railing, here ventured to say, with some hesitation: "I heard Preacher Hockersmith say down to Lebanon, at camp-meeting, last week, that no man that chawed tobacco could hope to get the blessing. He said it was 'filthiness of the flesh.'" He gasped rather than spoke the last words, for all eyes were turned upon him in stern surprise and disapproval, and all the moving lower jaws suddenly dropped rigid. There was silence for the space of a minute. Then Brother Jones recovered himself.

"Well, I know I got the *evidence* of the Spirit in me, and I 've chawed since I was five year old. You must have heard wrong, Charlie. Surely Brother Hockersmith never said that!"

"Yes, he did," replied the boy, not without a visible tremor.

"Where 's his reference? Where 's his Bible for it?" demanded Brother Jones. "Got to show me Bible on any line before I 'll believe it."

"Well, he said somewheres in Corinthians

it said, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh.' He say if chawing tobacco was n't filthiness of the flesh, he 'd like to know *what* it was. He say a *hog* would n't chaw tobacco. He say he had a special call to preach on that line."

"Well, he need n't be norating it around none in these parts!" exclaimed Brother Jones, in a high and scornful voice. "Why, what's tobacco made for, I say? Just to set on a stump and look at? Just to plant and plow and worm? No, gentlemen; things has their uses. I ask you all, gentlemen, if it wa' n't made to chaw?" He extended his right arm in an inclusive gesture. "I reckon Brother Hockersmith ain't the *only* man that has leadings. I reckon there's others that's got some portion of the Spirit!"

Brother Rolly moved uneasily, and slowly pushed his broad straw hat off of his forehead.

"What else did he say on that line, Charlie?" he asked, after a few minutes' reflection.

"He said there was just lots of folks that was plumb ready for the blessing, all but that, and look like they found tobacco harder to give up than all the rest, and kept racking

around with their mouth full of tobacco, looking for the blessing, and wondering why they did n't get it."

"That may be the very thing your soul 's hanging back on, Brother Rolly," said Brother Melton, a tall, fine-looking young man, with clear, direct eyes, who was leaning against one of the posts. "Everybody has their drawbacks. Sometimes it 's one thing, sometimes another. The devil 's sure to nose around and find out the particular spot where he can get his hold on a man. With me it was my gold collar-button. The devil mighty near got me on that! I 'd heard a sight of preaching on the gold line, but look like I could n't see the harm in that there little old collar-button my father 'd wore before me. I kept a striving for the blessing, and praying fit to kill. I taken off my necktie, for of course I knowed that was superfloo-ous adornment. But then it seem like I had more need than ever of that collar-button. Well, gentlemen, it got so, when I 'd be up at the mourners' bench or praying anywhere, that collar-button it 'd burn right into my neck, and after while it never quit burning at all. I was just in misery, and done give up hopes of getting

the blessing. Kept resisting for all I was worth, till one day when I was dressing I got the strength to snatch it off and throw it out of the window. Well, sir, I had n't no more 'n done it before I got the blessing all through my soul, and commenced to shout. Rulaney she come a-running from the kitchen, and she said she never seen nobody have a more glorious experience than me that morning, less 'n it was the time she throwed her new spring hat into the fire."

"It was swearing with me," mournfully remarked Brother Gideon Blevins, his lantern-jaws snapping to after each sentence. "I was born a-cussing. My pa he cussed before me. I could n't be out-cussed. Somehow got religion. Commenced seeking the blessing. Look like I 'd never get it. Was always held back. Then I 'd get mad and turn in and cuss the devil for all I was worth. One day I was worming tobacco, and set down on a log to meditate. I commenced to think about the devil holding me back, and how he held Adam and Eve back in the first place, and Jonah, and them, and first thing I knowed I was cussing him like a blue streak. Pretty soon I heard a rustling in the bushes behind

that log, and every cuss-word I 'd say, something would say it over again. Well, I knowed the devil and me was in pretty close quarters then, so I turned in to cuss him black and blue. Well, sir, the more I talked, the more he talked, till after while he was saying about ten words to me one, and I could n't hear what I *was* saying. I set and listened awhile, and then I up and made a bee-line for the house. I seen I was whipped, and that he could beat me at it so bad I was n't no-where. So I quit."

"Boiled shirts was my drawback," timidly said young Brother Tice Deacon, a mild-eyed young man with a dawning mustache. "I used to send my shirt up to town every week to be boilt and laundered. But I had a leading on the fine linen line, and finally give it up, and got the blessing."

Here Mr. Bundy, the storekeeper, who stood bracing his elbows against the door-posts, put in a scornful remark. "By gosh! You folks 'll swallow a camel next! Seems to me if a man lives righteous as he knows how, and don't shoot nobody, and pays his just debts, he 's going to come out at the big end of the horn. I 'd bet my money on him every time, a durn sight quicker than on some

of them that 's got such a terrible sight of religion and sanctification, and don't pay their honest debts!" He gazed in a non-committal way at the western sky. There was a dead silence. Some of the gentlemen, noticeably Brother Jones, squirmed uncomfortably.

The conversation had received too much of a damper to thrive after this, and the men sauntered off one by one to the hitching-bar after their horses. Brother Rolly mounted his fat bay mare in silent meditation, and set off at a brisk canter for home. Keziah gradually slackened her speed as they went down the one long street of the Station, until, reaching the end of it, and not receiving the expected discouragement from Brother Rolly, she relapsed into a slow walk, leisurely switching her tail from time to time. Meanwhile Brother Rolly sat, rapt and unseeing, on her back. Not for him did the evening sky flame with gold and red and purple; not for him the heavy yellow light slant through the trees in great bars, glorifying the dusty road and grass and weeds. Brother Rolly was looking inward. They went slowly on, through the green woods, between broad fields where the stately tobacco-plant spread its soft, ample leaves, or tall corn rustled lazily. Once

Brother Rolly slipped his hand into his trousers-pocket, and drawing therefrom the plug of "Kentucky Orphan," gazed at it long and earnestly, and with a deep groan slipped it back again. Keziah walked on, through more woods, past the three-mile covered bridge, and presently stopped short before Brother Rolly's own big gate. Brother Rolly slowly raised his eyes, and gazed around him, his usually placid brow contracted in a frown, a stern gleam in his eye. Once more he brought forth the "Kentucky Orphan," and, raising his arm, prepared to throw it far out into the field. But, in so doing, a whiff of its odor reached him. It was too much. He jerked his extended arm back, and inhaled the fragrance. The plug brushed against his mustache. His teeth spasmodically closed upon it. He drew a long, sighing breath; the frown melted away; he closed his eyes.

Suddenly his whole frame stiffened; his eyes flew open; he grasped the "Kentucky Orphan" and flung it far out into the corn-field, with a loud shout as of victory.

The next day it was told in the Station that Brother Rolly had found the blessing.

KATE NEGLEY'S LEADINGS

KATE NEGLEY'S LEADINGS

MRS. MELISSA ALLGOOD gathered the last handful of meal from the pan on her arm, and scattered it among the young guineas. "Them little guinea-fowl," she said, "can come about as near eating folks out of house and home as the next one. They ain't got the ambition to scratch for theirselves that young chickens has, or young turkeys, or goslings. But seems to me like I like 'em all the more for it. It's same as babies,—they got to have everything done for them,—and so helpless and confiding, folks can't help loving them, even *when* they got drawbacks."

She settled herself comfortably on the smoke-house step, and pushed back the white sunbonnet from her plump, rosy face and warm blue eyes. "But I commenced telling you about Kate Negley and the Doctor, and here I am plumb off on the guinea line. I

never was much of a talker, noways, and can't stick to what I want to tell. Ma she always says, when I commence to tell anything, 'Now, M'liss, you shut up, and let *me* tell that. You 'll talk all day.' As I was saying, when Kate Negley takes anything, she takes it pretty hard. When she had the whooping-cough, and chicken-pox, and measles, she had 'em worse than anybody else. And when she fell in love with Doctor Negley, she had *that* awful bad. Them that run could read. So when she got sanctification, nobody was n't surprised when she taken that hard, too. She said she 'd never stop till she was as wholly sanctified as they make 'em. And she never got tired searching the Scriptures to find out something you must n't do. Then she 'd get up next Sunday in meeting and tell about such and such a text, and her having such and such a leading or experience on that line, and feeling called to tell it. Kate Negley she commenced to get so terrible godly, all the rest of us just felt like we was n't nowheres.

"One of her ideas was that nobody could be sanctified and drink coffee. You know Solomon says 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging,' and Kate Negley say if

coffee was n't strong drink, she never seen any, and that anybody that would drink it was n't truly sanctified. That riled the Station folks considable. Of course we all thought it was wrong to drink liquor, and we had local option anyways in the Station ; but most of us did n't set no store on its being wrong to drink coffee.

“ The next notion she taken up was on the tobacco line. She got up and talked on that line when she knowed Brother Cheatham himself, that was then preaching for us, chewed tobacco and smoked. She said it was a mark of the beast. She said she was afraid a heap of church-members would spend eternity in a' awful hell.

“ The Station folks had n't much more than got over that talk, before one Sunday Kate Negley come in church with her hair hanging down her back, and after preaching, she up and say she 'd had a bright experience on the hair line. That she 'd been a-studying a long time about what Paul says about women-folks adorning themselves with modest apparel, and not with braided hair or jewels or costly array. She say she done give up the jewels and costly array too long ago to talk about,

but she never did quite understand about the braided hair. She say she always supposed it meant platted, and she quit platting her hair when she first got the blessing. But she say she never was just easy about it, and she went up to town to see her cousin Miss Simmons last week, and Miss Simmons done got a new dictionary, and she think that's a good chance to find out just what braided meant. So she find where it explain the word 'braided'; and she say it say braided means 'to bend, to twist, to entwine, to plat,' and Kate Negley say if any woman can put up her hair without doing one of them things, she 'd like to see them do it. She say she think it 's violation of the Word of God for women to wear their hair put up, and that she never expect to wear hers put up again, and she advise 'em all that want to be wholly sanctified never to wear their hair put up no more. Well, that just more than stirred up the women-folks, and some of them was right in for letting their hair hang down their backs like Kate Negley's. But the men-folks they held a meeting, and passed resolutions that the first woman that turned her hair loose thataway, her husband would up and leave her, and that settled them.

"Doctor Negley he did n't join in that meeting, and all the men was kind of afraid to ask him to join. Doctor Negley he s a saint on earth, if I do say it, and him not sanctified. He 's just the easiest, kindest, generouest man that ever was, and done spoilt Kate Negley to death is what is the matter with her now. He just thinks Kate Negley can't be beat no-where, and anything she does is all right. When she let her hair down, he just say that 's all right, he think she look mighty pretty that-away. And I don't say she did n't. Her hair it 's curly, and not very long, and ain't got a gray thread in it, and I always thought it *did* look real pretty. But laws! there ain't a woman in a thousand could have done it and looked decent! But Kate she always was a real pretty woman, and before she got sanctification she used to know it, and used to be terrible stylish and fashionable, and put on more airs than ever was seen in these parts. Doctor he just give her more than was good for any woman. A few years after they married he built her the nicest house in the Station,— two stories, and eight rooms in it, and porches and windows all around. They never had no children, and the Doctor he took out

all his spoiling on Kate, and she used to it, and look for it. Of course, when Kate got religion, she natchully wanted to convert the Doctor the first thing; but he kind of shake his head and laugh a little, and say he think she got enough religion to carry 'em both through, and for her to go 'long and do the praying and shouting while he make the living.

" Well, after Kate Negley let her hair down she kind of taken a back seat for awhile. Seem like she sort of come to a stopping-place. And things would have moved along smooth enough if it had n't been for the Doctor having took up with the Masons when he went to medical college up at Louisville. He joined them then, and kept up a terrible han-kering after them ever since, look like, and at last he give an invite to the Lodge up in Henderson to come out to the Station and get up a branch lodge out here. At first the men-folks kind of held back, on account of the initiation and riding the goat and that; but finally most of them got up their courage and joined,— Brother Gilly Jones, and Brother Blevins, and Brother Rolly McKittrick, and more of the sanctified, and *of course* all the

sinners. And even Brother Cheatham himself joined them and met with them. They hired the room over Bundy's store, and commenced to meet two or three nights a week, and seemed to have considerable fun. They 'd pass all kinds of winks and signs between 'em, and had a particular hand-shake.

"Of course, the women-folks did n't like it none too well, and did n't thank the Doctor for bringing that lodge out here. But they never let on. But I knew if Kate Negley had feelings on the subject we 'd hear from her. Sure enough, about three weeks after that lodge got started to running nice, Kate Negley she up one Sunday after preaching and say she been a-warring with the Spirit till she reached a point where she must move out and speak or lose her own soul. She say she done refused to take action till she pretty near lost the blessing, and got plumb desperate. She say the particular line she felt called to speak on was secret societies and lodges. She say she had a big leading on that line, but she been quenching the Spirit, and pulling back from the work. But she say when she seen them as ought to speak *would n't* speak, but was just a-pacing down the big road their-

selves, she dass n't keep quiet any longer. She say the Bible say to lay aside every weight, and be not conformed to the world, and not to have fellowship with the workers of darkness. She say she supposed the lodges might get mad at being called workers of darkness, but, she say, what else was they? She say who knows what was going on inside that lodge-room? She say *nobody* knows, because there ain't no way in the world to get a peep *into* it. She say if they was n't workers of darkness, how come they bolt them doors and paint them lower window-panes? She say yea, it was like the Bible say, 'They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds was evil.' She say yea, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest.' She say if their doings was righteous, why n't they get out in broad daylight and do them? She say how come they act like they ashamed of them? She say if they found any salvation in riding a goat, why n't they let the light shine? She say, another thing, we was commanded not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, and yet, she

say, here was Brother Jones and Brother Rolly McKittrick, and others she *could* name, a-cohorting together with all the sinners and scoffers in the Station. She say she was afraid on the Great Day there 'd be a division even amongst them that called themselves sanctified. She say while some was setting up on the *right* hand, she was afraid that others she could name, that had hankered after the company of sinners and goats in *this* world, would be getting a bigger dose of it than they wanted *there!*

“ Well, you ought to have seen them men-folks while she was a-talking. You never seen anything look as mad in your life. Brother Cheatham he was just a-boiling, and he jump up right quick like he going to answer her. But he seen she got Scripture on 'em, so he pull himself together and give out a hymn. The Doctor he was n't at church, because he never did come; but Monday night when the lodge met again, Brother Jones and them up and told the Doctor what Kate said. The Doctor he laughed real quiet, and told 'em he reckon what he had to stand every day in the week they could certainly stand a little while on Sunday. He told 'em not to mind, that

women was women, and it would all blow over after a while.

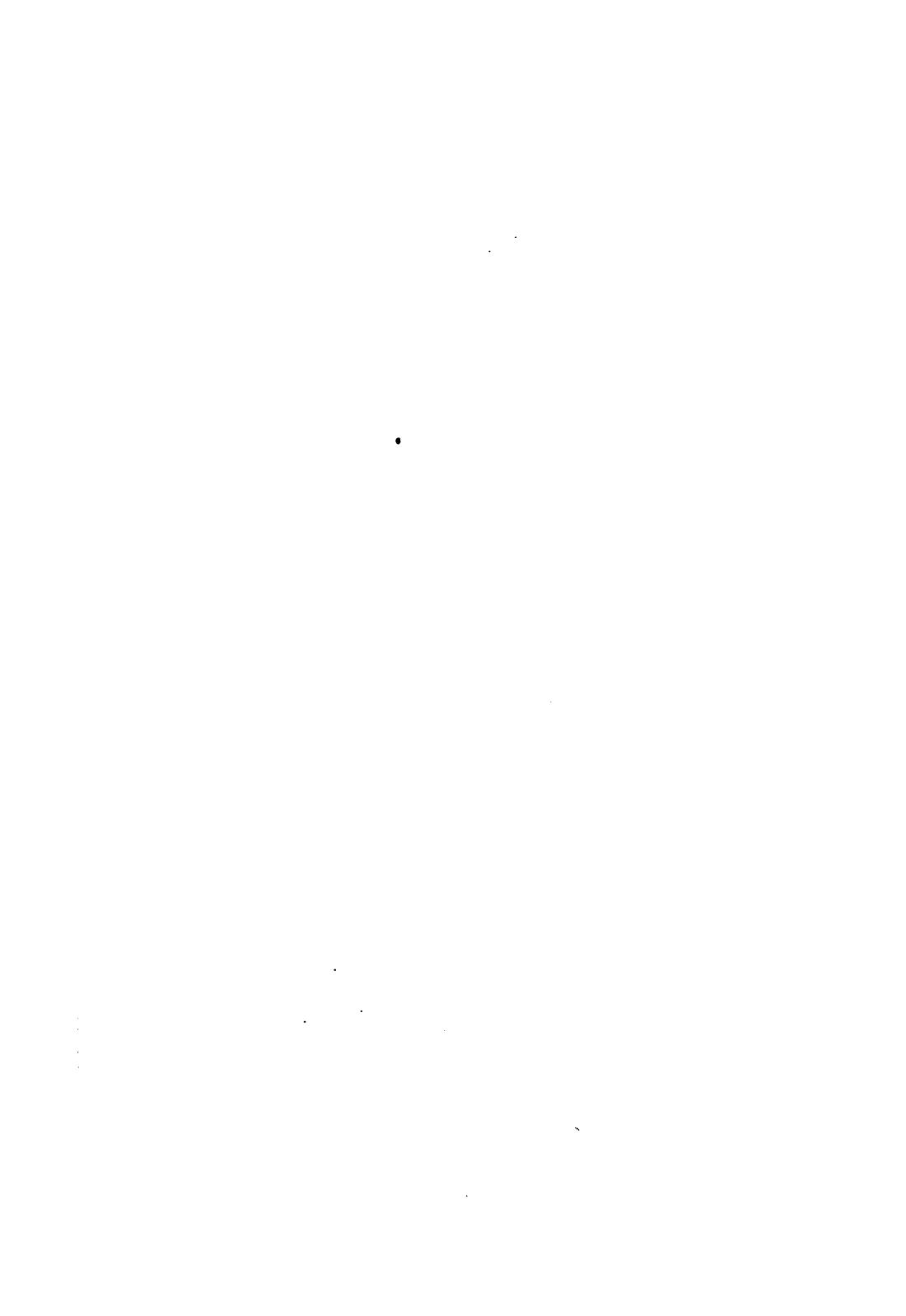
“But it did n’t blow over. Kate she never said no more in church, but she went around to see all the women-folks and talked to them, and got them all stirred up, and they commenced on their particular husbands, and things commenced to run pretty high in the Station. The more the women talked, the more the men went to the lodge to get a little peace. At last Brother Jones and them told the Doctor one night that he ’d have to do something to shut his wife’s mouth, that life was getting to be a mighty ornery thing with all the women a-talking so much, and they really thought something ought to be done. The Doctor he agreed with ’em, and say he think something ought to be done, too. They kept on discussing of it till it got pretty late before they knew it, and more than one of ’em felt kind of trembly going home, because they did n’t know what their women *would* say this time. The Doctor he fairly made tracks for home, and he thought he ’d let himself in real easy, and not wake up Kate Negley. He turned the knob real quiet, not making no noise, and kind of give the door a

shove. But the door would n't budge, and he found that door been locked on the inside. He tiptoed around to the kitchen door then, but he found that locked too. Then he tried the dining-room window ; but he recollect all the windows got them patent fasteners on 'em to keep out the burglars. So he seen he 'd have to wake up Kate Negley. He tiptoed around to the front door again, and hollered up real soft, 'Open the door, Kate!' He waited a little, and then he hollered a little louder, 'I wish you 'd please get up there and unlock this door!' Still he never got no answer. It was a cold night, too, and blowing like everything. He rap on the door then, and holler right loud and shake the door, 'Hurry up and let me in, will you? I 'm all but froze!' Then he heard a window go up, and Kate Negley she poke her head out right slow, and look at him. 'Suppose you get in with your lodge key!' she says, mighty calm-like. Then he heard her shut the window and get back into bed.

"The Doctor he stood there a minute right still, and then he put out for the wood-house, and pretty soon come back with a' ax. Now if there was anything in the world that Kate

Negley would have set store by if she had n't been sanctified, it was that front door of hers. I don't say she *did* take pride in it, for, of course, them that 's got sanctification has the Old Adam took out of them, and the carnal mind, and the pride of the eye and of the flesh. But I *do* say if there was anything she *would* have been proud of, if she *had n't* been sanctified, it was that front door. The Doctor had sent off somewherees after it, and there never was, or has been, anything like it in the Station. It was cherry-wood, considably carved, and had two long panes of whitish glass in it. He come up on the porch, and holler up, 'I 'm a-coming in with my lodge-key!' and with that he let fly at that front door, and before you could say Jack Robinson he had cut it in about a hundred pieces. The glass it made a terrible noise a-falling, and Kate Negley she come down them stairs two at a time, in her night-clothes. She wring her hands, and cry, and holler. But it never fazed the Doctor. He just kept chopping till that door was just nice for kindling-wood. All he say was, 'You see I 'm a-getting in with my lodge-key!' And next day the Doctor sent for Abe Timbles, that

potters around considerable at carpentering, to come and take the measure for the plainest deal door he could make. And that 's the kind of front door Kate Negley 's got in her house this day. And she still has her leadings, but you just bet she don 't have no more on the lodge line."



AN EXPERIENCE ON THE DRESS
LINE

AN EXPERIENCE ON THE DRESS LINE

MRS. MELISSA ALLGOOD and I had just returned from church. She carefully laid her small black bonnet and mits in the bureau drawer, smoothed back the tiny curls on her forehead, and tied about her waist a spotless white apron, preparatory to putting dinner on the table. The rocking-chair was inviting, however, and time not pressing, so she settled herself for a few minutes' talk.

"Of course it ain't right for folks to try to judge for one another," she began, "and I've always said so. What's right for one is wrong for others. Now, if *I* was to wear puffed sleeves like them you got on, I'd be selling my soul. But of course nobody can't expect you to feel thataway, not being regenerated. Maybe you don't know the Bible's against it? Well, Ezekiel comes out square and plain on that line. Then you know, too, Paul says to

put away all superfluities and naughtiness of the flesh, and not to conform to the world. Now, anybody knows all them puffs and gathers in sleeves is superfluities ; and you know mighty well you just wear 'em because they 're the style ! " She paused, and I was dumb before my accuser. " One of the biggest experiences I ever had in my life," she continued, " was on the puffed sleeves line.

" You know, when I first got sanctification, and before I felt the call to preach, I was in the dressmaking and millinery business here at the Station. I had the trade here, and all my own way. Sometimes I 'd make as high as four or five dollars in one day, and then like as not, before I got religion, I 'd get on the train and go up to town the next week and spend the last cent on clothes I never needed at all,—ribbons, and flowers, and trimmings, and more ungodliness than I can recollect now. Well, when I got sanctification, of course I give up vanity for my own self, and sold my new four-dollar spring hat with the roses on it to old Aunt Mourning for a dollar and thirty cents, and ripped the ruffles and velvet off my black cashmere, and give my green silk to a unregenerate niece of pa's, and

slicked back my bangs, and tried to live godly so far as *I* was concerned. But I kept right on making ungodly dresses for other people, and soul-snaring hats, and just thought I was plumb set up and in for glory because I lived righteous myself and did n't wear no vanities like the other women-folks, and I 'd bless heaven every day because I was so much better than they was. When the women come in to have their dresses made and buy their hats, I 'd talk to 'em about the vanities of this world, and advise 'em not to have too many extra ruffles and trimmings, and not to dress too gay and worldly, and then I thought I 'd done my duty, and when they wanted them extra ruffles and trimmings anyhow, why, I 'd make 'em.

“One day, about a year ago last January, here come Daught Pickett one morning bright and early, her hair flying and her horse blowing, and said she wanted her wedding clothes made up in a week's time; that she and George done decided to get married next week and go up to Louisville on their wedding trip. I helped her down off her horse, and she come inside, and we set down to look at some fashion-plates she brought with her,

to see how to make her wedding-dress. She had her wedding-dress in her arms, done up in a big bundle. She said she was bound to have some of them new-fashioned big puffed sleeves that was all the style; that if she could n't be in the style she did n't want to be nowheres; that she would n't no more show up in Louisville without them big sleeves than she would *fly*; that she did n't want nobody to get ahead of her in styles.

“‘Daught,’ I says, ‘you know what Paul says about wearing superfluous adornment,’ I says, ‘and you know them sleeves with all them yards of goods in ‘em ain’t nothing else but that; and you know, too, Daught,’ I says, ‘that Paul says that women ought rather to clothe themselves in shamefacedness and sobriety.’ ‘Oh, you get out!’ she says. ‘You know if I was to go up to Louisville with nothing on but that they’d run me out of town! I want them puffed sleeves, and am going to have ‘em, Melissy Allgood! And I want ‘em of the velvet, just as big as you can make ‘em, and with lots of stuffing in ‘em to hold ‘em out.’ ‘Well, Daught,’ I says, ‘I ‘ve give you warning, and if you *will* live worldly and ungodly, my hands is clean of it.’

“So I unrolled that peacock-blue cashmere and velvet and cut it out, and me and Lucy Pride, that was then staying with me, went to work on it. Look like I did n’t enjoy, somehow, working on them sleeves; but I put lots of stiffening in ‘em, like Daught said, till they set out about a foot, and sent the dress out to Daught the day before the wedding. That was Monday, and the wedding was to come off Tuesday night. Of course me and Lucy Pride was fixing to go to it, like all the rest of the Station,—for everybody that was n’t kin to Daught’s folks was kin to George’s. I knew Daught always had her way about things, and that it would be a big wedding. She was the only girl, and her pa and ma just put in their time spoiling her from the day she seen the light, and she was mighty heady, and had a heap of vanity.

“It turned awful cold Monday night, and Tuesday morning I woke up with a bad sore-throat,—so bad I could n’t hardly swallow. When I seen how hard it was snowing and blowing outdoors, I commenced to feel like maybe I would n’t get to Daught’s wedding that night. But I doctored up all day, and Lucy Pride made up four or five different

gargles for me, and I did n't do nothing but gargle all day long. But it was n't no use. By four o'clock I was in considable of a fever, and I told Lucy Pride I might as well give out going to the wedding, and for her to dress and go along with her Aunt Liza Bundy's folks in the wagon. So she got ready, and they started off about five o'clock. The wedding was to be at seven, and there was three miles to go, and bad roads, and they wanted to get there in time to help some, anyhow, if they could.

“After Lucy started I fastened up the store, and went back to the kitchen, and made me some tea and drank it, and eat some cold supper, and washed up the dishes, and then I set down in front of the stove to read a chapter before I went to bed. I opened the Bible careless, and the first words my eyes fell on was Ezekiel xiii. 18: ‘Thus saith the Lord, Woe to the women that sew pillows in arm-holes to hunt the souls of my people!’ I read it again, and commenced to break out in a cold sweat. I could n't believe my eyes. ‘Woe to the women that sew pillows in arm-holes; wherefore saith the Lord, Behold I am against your pillows wherewith ye hunt souls

to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.' I got as weak as a baby, and my knees all trembly. I felt like I was death-smit. Look like my head was whirling around and around. 'Lord, help a lost sinner!' I says. 'Here I been going against Scripture, and bringing down curses on my soul; here I been sewing pillows in Daught Pickett's wedding-dress armholes to hunt souls! Lord, help! Lord, help! I never meant to do it,' I says; 'but I ought to have searched the Scriptures more. And now I 'm under the condemnation! And if Daught Pickett's soul, and all them souls at her wedding, is lost,' I says, 'it will all be on my head!' I fairly groaned out loud. 'If them pillows in Daught's armholes entices and snares any souls, Melissy Allgood is the woman that sewed 'em in, and woe, *woe* to her! The worm that never dies, and the fire that burns forever!' Look like I 'd die of misery.

"Then the devil says to me right soft, 'You never put no pillows in them armholes. There ain't nothing at all there but them velvet sleeves and that crinoline inside to stiffen 'em. There ain't no pillows nowheres about them.

sleeves!' You know he 's mighty sly. 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' I says. 'Don't the Scripture say to avoid even the appearance of evil? And I 'd like to know the difference between sleeves that has pillows in 'em, and sleeves that *looks like* they has pillows in 'em! Ain't one just as enticing to souls as the other?' I says. I got up and walked the floor. 'Anyhow, pillows is pillows!' I says, 'whether they stuffed with feathers, or crino-line, or *air*; and whether they made out of velvet or bed-ticking. And if them sleeves ain't pillows, and *big* ones,' I says, 'I never seen any! And my soul 's under the curse. And if I don't do something to help myself, I 'm eternally lost. The only thing for me to do,' I says, 'is to ride out to Daught's and take them sleeves off of her before she gets married in 'em. Daught 's a pretty girl,' I says, 'and her pa 's got money; and if she stands up there and marries in them sleeves, it 'll snare every soul that 's looking at her,' I says, 'and every girl in the county, and all the old women, too, will be bound to follow right along, and have some of them ungodly sleeves, and it 'll all be on my head!'

"The devil fairly laughed at me. 'You

look like going out to Daught Pickett's,' he says, 'mighty near down with pneumonia, and your throat tied up in goose-grease, and it snowing and blowing fit to kill. And even if you live to get there,' he says, 'Daught Pickett won't take off them sleeves!' 'Yes she will,' I says, 'and you 'll see! Anyhow, that 's the Lord's business, not mine. And I 'm going to do my part if it kills me,' I says. 'I 'd better have my body dead than my soul damned,' I says.

"I went in the store and looked at the clock. It was half-past six, and Daught going to be married at seven! 'Lord,' I says, 'help me to get there in time!' I snatched up Lucy Pride's black shawl and tied it over my head, and my big blanket shawl and wrapped it all around me. Then I lit out for the stable after old Molly. Ma was keeping her old white mare in my stable that winter because my stable was tighter than hers. It was snowing fast and steady, and the wind fairly whistling around the corners. I felt my way in the stable to old Molly, and found the bridle, and led her out where it was lighter, and put it on. I did n't take time for no saddle. I 'd rode bareback too many a time. I

led her to the back porch and jumped on. Then we started out the gate and down the big road. It would have been a dark night if it had n't been for the snow; but I could see my way a little ahead. I just prayed every step of the way. Old Molly she ambled along like she had all the time there was. I 'd slap her with my hand, but she so fat it never made no impression on her. So I stopped in front of Doctor Negley's fence and broke off a peach-tree limb, and fairly laid it on her, and she commenced to pick up her feet some. But the snow kept balling in her hoofs so she could n't make much headway. Seemed to me like I could have crawled faster. And the cold air hurt my throat awful, and look like my head would certainly burn up. But I was bound I 'd get them sleeves off of Daught or die a-trying I just prayed without ceasing, and laid the switch on old Molly pretty near every word. Looked to me like I could just see everything that was going on at Daught's. I could see all the connection there, the women-folks flying around in the kitchen and dining-room, setting the tables and dishing out the victuals, and the men-folks and children shut up in the two front rooms to keep

'em out of the way. I could see the wedding-cakes,—Daught had told me she was going to have eight different kinds—all iced and shining, standing in a row down the middle of the tables, and the hams all browned nice and setting about, and the turkeys at both ends of the tables, and the big dishes full of fried oysters, and more a-frying in the kitchen, and the big plates of Mis' Pickett's beat biscuits, and the preserves and jellies and pickles set so thick you could n't see no tablecloth no-where, and the apple-dumplings and peach-cobblers and mince-pies and pitchers of cider setting on the sideboard thick. I knew the Picketts was proud folks, and their daughter would n't have no half-way wedding. And I could just see the girls up-stairs in Daught's room, dressing Daught, and primping no little themselves, and all admiring them big sleeves of Daught's. And I knew George and the rest of the young men was in the boys' room, George terrible nervous, but trying to act mighty don't-care, and combing his hair every two minutes—George always did have mighty unruly hair. I could see it all pretty near like I was there, and hear the noise and talking. And then seem like I could see the

children poking their heads out of the doors into the hall, watching for the bridal party to come down the stairs, and Preacher Cheatham taking his place in the parlor in front of the organ, and hunting up a psalm to read, and then George and the boys coming downstairs and waiting at the foot, and Daught's pa waiting at the head of the steps for her. I just fairly give it to old Molly. 'Help me to get there, Lord!' I says. 'If you 'll just keep Daught primping a *little* longer!' I says. I knew I must be pretty near the Pickett's big gate by this time. When I got to it, it was wide open, and I just rode in like Indians was after me. Just then somebody opened the front hall door a minute, and I seen Daught on her pa's arm coming down the stairs. I give old Molly one last lick, and broke the switch all to pieces. We was at the front porch in about a second, and I just fell off of old Molly and rushed in. The bridal party had marched into the parlor, and was taking their places before the preacher, Daught and George in the middle, and the couples that was waiting on them on both sides, and them sleeves on Daught standing out so wide George could n't get nowheres near her. I

fairly hollered: 'Stop!' I says. 'Wait a minute! This wedding can't go on!' I says. The connection all turned around like they was plumb thunderstruck. I had them shawls all bundled around me so 's nobody knew me at first, I reckon. I jerked Lucy Pride's shawl off my head. 'It 's Melissy Allgood!' I says. 'The woman that sewed pillows in armholes, and went against Scripture, and got her soul under the condemnation!' They all looked at me like they thought I was plumb crazy. 'It 's them big sleeves of Daught's,' I says. 'Ezekiel is against 'em. He says "*Woe* to the women that sew pillows in armholes!" I just read it in the Bible this evening, and I come out to take them sleeves off of Daught, and save my soul!'

"Lucy Pride she run up and shook my arm. 'Melissy Allgood, shut up!' she says. 'Don't you see they just beginning the wedding? You got fever, and ain't at yourself.' 'Yes, I am, Lucy Pride,' I says, 'and I 'm bound to get them sleeves off of Daught or lose my soul. I tell you I got *Bible* for it! And I know Daught will take them sleeves off to save my soul,—won't you, Daught?' I says. Daught was standing up mighty straight and

pale. ‘Melissy Allgood, I don’t know what’s the matter with you,’ she says, ‘coming in and spoiling my wedding this way!’ ‘Daught, honey,’ I says, ‘it ain’t me,—it’s them sleeves that’s spoiling your wedding,—them ungodly sleeves. But you can just take ‘em off and put on something else, and it’ll be all right. It ain’t too late,—the harm ain’t all done yet.’ ‘But I won’t do no such a thing!’ Daught says. She commenced to get mad, and her cheeks like red peonies. ‘I know you don’t want to see my soul lost and in torment, Daught,’ I says, ‘and Ezekiel says, “*Woe* to the women that sew pillows in armholes.” I’ll show it to you here in the Bible.’ I snatched the Bible from Brother Cheatham, and found the place, and read it to ‘em.

“‘I don’t care what Ezekiel says,’ Daught says, ‘I’m going to get married in my wedding-dress! And I don’t thank you, Melissy Allgood, for coming here and spoiling my wedding!’ She commenced to cry.

“‘You don’t feel half as bad about it as I do, honey,’ I says; ‘I would n’t have had it happen for anything. But I’m trying to live according to Scripture, and I’m the woman that sewed them pillows in your armholes, and

now I 'm bound to get 'em off of you, the Lord being against 'em, and save souls from being enticed by 'em, and save my own soul. Souls is a lot more account than sleeves,' I says, 'and eternity 's a heap longer than a wedding! Take 'em off, honey,' I says, 'and save my soul!'

"Daught was leaning on her pa's shoulder, just crying and shaking. 'I won't do it!' she says, 'I won't do it!'

"'You talk to her, Brother Cheatham,' I says, 'and tell her she must n't go against Bible.' Brother Cheatham he kind of hummed and hawed. 'Sist' Allgood,' he says, 'I hav' n't never studied much about that particular point in Ezekiel,' he says, 'and I don't know as I am competent to speak on it.'

"'Well, you know it ain't right for anybody to go right contrary to Bible, Brother Cheatham,' I says, 'and Ezekiel says plain that the Lord is against them pillows in armholes. I don't see as anybody would need much studying on such a plain point as that,' I says.

"'I would feel like I ought to think and pray over it a while,' he says; 'I reckon you and Sister Daught better settle it between you.'

"'Well, Daught,' I says, 'I know you ain't

going right square back on a' old friend like me,' I says; 'I know you think too much of me. I know you could n't stand to see my soul lost, and me in torment, all on account of a pair of sleeves!' I says. 'I know you 'd rather get married in a meal-sack!' I says. Daught she kept crying on her pa's shoulder, and shaking her head. Look to me like all the courage was oozing out of me,—like I might as well give up to see my soul lost. But anybody ain't going to lose their soul without fighting for it. 'But of course you don't have to get married in no meal-sack, Daught,' I says, 'If I was you I 'd just run up-stairs and put on that pretty white swiss, with low neck and short sleeves, that I made for you last summer when you went up to town. It 's a *heap* more stylish to get married in a white dress, and in low neck and short sleeves,' I says, 'and that swiss would be a heap prettier wedding-dress. And there ain't a girl in the county got as pretty arms and neck as you got, Daught—not *one*—nor nowheres else. And I think you 'd look about ten times sweeter! And I could take you up-stairs and put it on you in five minutes, honey,' I says, 'and everybody 'd think you was the sweetest bride they ever seen, with them arms and that

neck of yours !' Daught she stopped crying some. 'Nobody on earth could n't tell you was a bride to look at you in that peacock-blue dress, Daught,' I says, 'but if you was to put on that white swiss, there could n't be no mistake about it, and you 'd feel more like you had got married. A woman can't hope in reason to get married more than two or three times in her life,' I says, 'and lots of 'em don't get to marry but once. And *I* think a woman ought to make the most of it, and look like a sure-enough bride. It may be the only time you 'll ever get to have a wedding, Daught,—George is a strong, healthy man, and might outlive you,—and if I was you I 'd feel like I ought to look my *very* best. And it 's a shame for any girl to have such arms and neck as you got and not get married in 'em ! I 'd feel like I was doing wrong ! Goodness gracious, what a pretty bride you 'd make in that white swiss ! People would n't get through talking about it in a year,—what a lovely bride you was, in that white dress, with them arms and neck !'

"Daught raised up her head. 'Melissy Allgood,' she says, 'I 'll do it,—to save your soul. But I tell you right now I 'm going to wear these puffed sleeves when I get up to

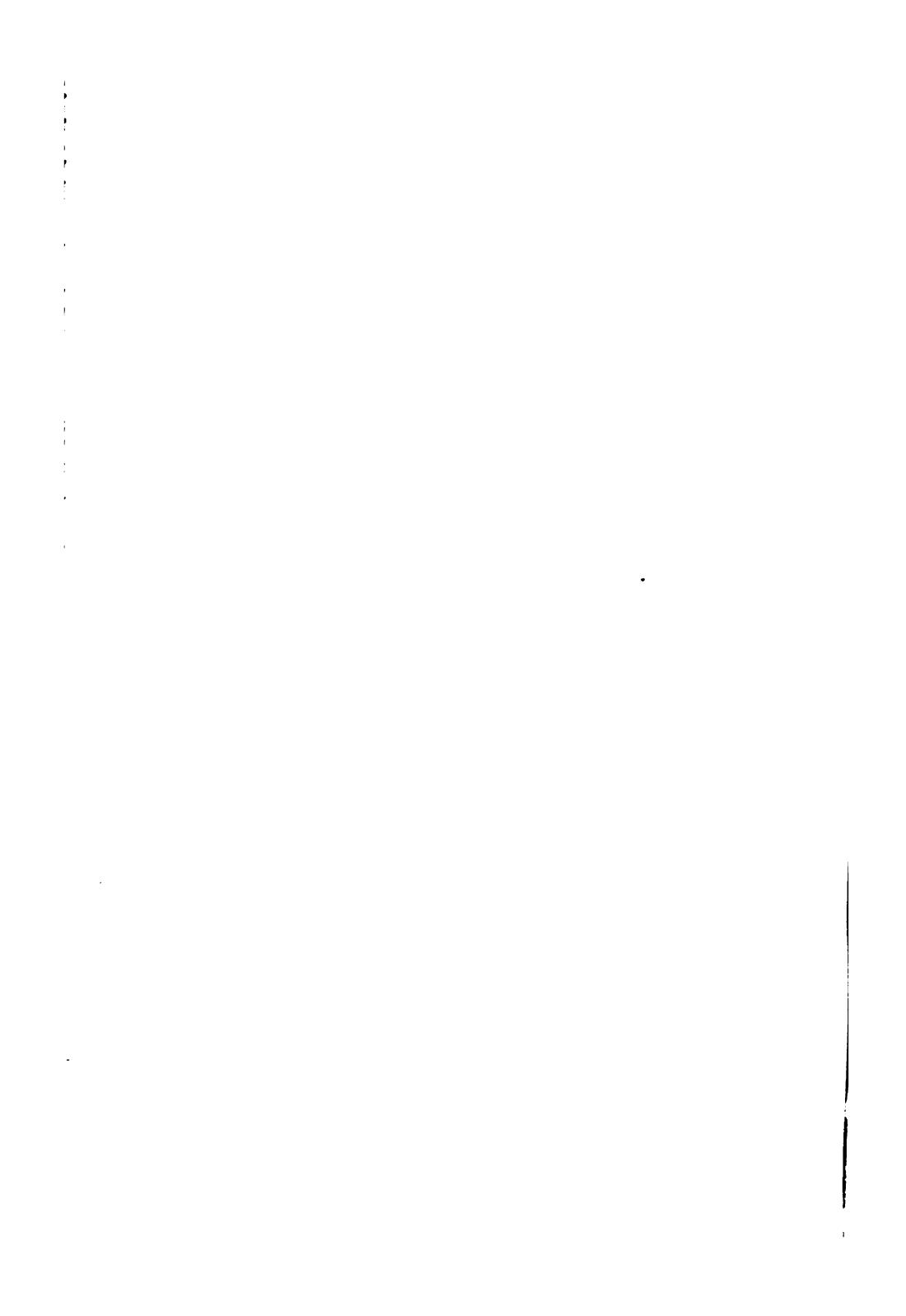
Louisville. I ain't going to have nobody say I ain't in the style!"

"' All right, Daught ! ' I says. ' The folks up there 's already worldly and eat up with vanity, and I reckon your sleeves won't make 'em much worse. But it 's different here, where people tries to live godly. Come right along and let 's take 'em off ! '

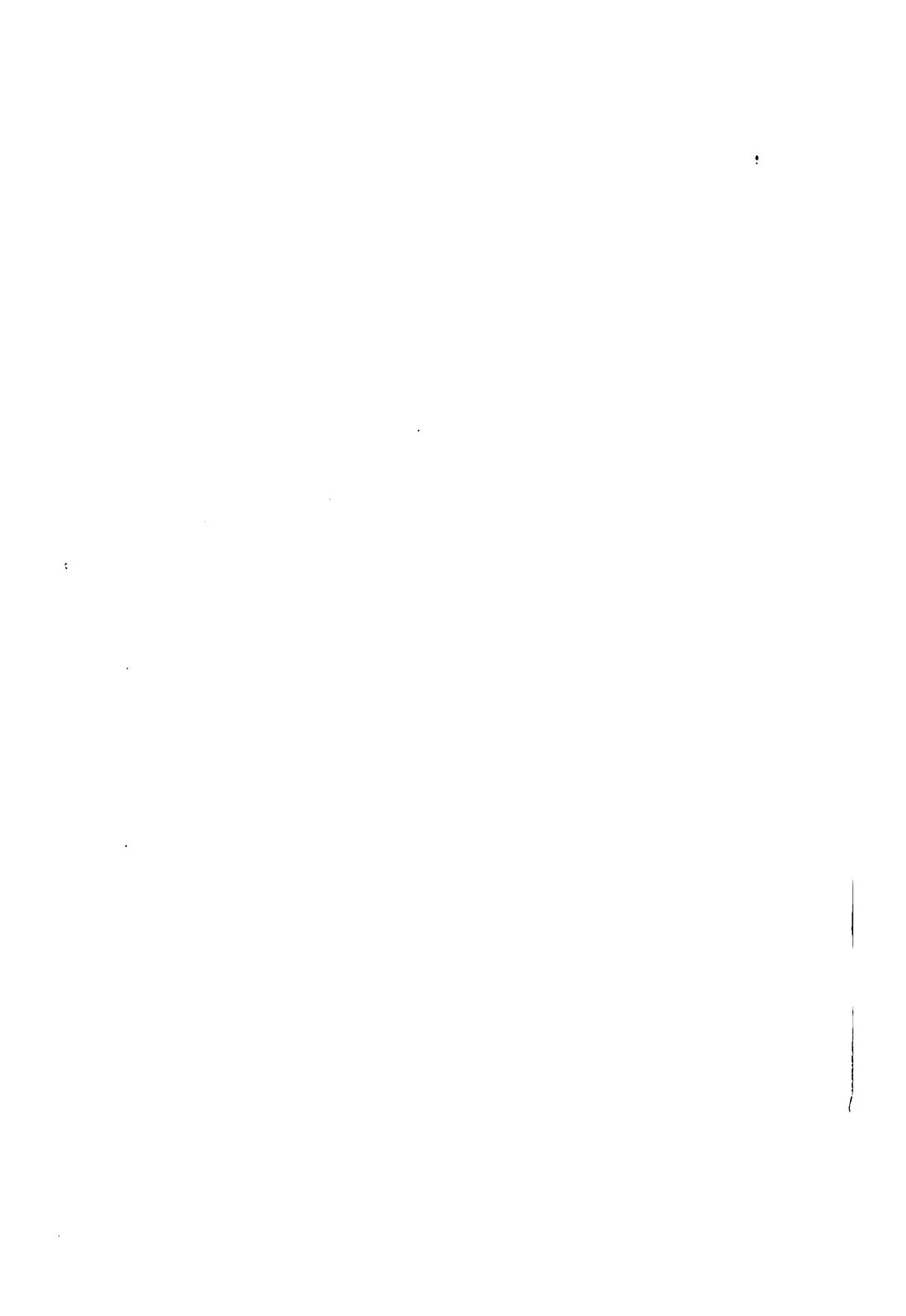
"I grabbed Daught's hand and run up-stairs with her, and fairly snatched off that peacock-blue dress and hunted up that white swiss and put it on her. I tell you I felt joy in my soul, and running through and through me. Then I took her down-stairs, and she looked so plump and pink and sweet in that swiss dress I could n't hardly keep from shouting while Brother Cheatham married 'em. When he got through I fairly turned myself loose ! Look like I 'd been on such a terrible strain, thinking my soul was lost, that the joy of knowing I was saved was pretty near too much for me. Nobody would n't have thought I 'd had sore-throat that day to hear me shout ! And I did n't seem to have it no more. Look like the joy in my soul had cured me completely.

" Then after everybody had kissed the

bride and shook hands with the groom, we all went out to supper. And I never thought, till I set down at one of them fine, loaded tables, and everybody diked out in their best, about me having on my old black alpaca I'd been working in for two years, and out at the elbows. But I never minded it, my soul was so happy. I just eat all I could hold, and so did everybody else. I never set down to as fine a supper in my life,—I reckon it was because I was having such a big spiritual feast at the same time. And we stayed till nearly ten o'clock, and then I could n't find old Molly nowheres, and went home with Lucy Pride's Aunt Liza Bundy's folks in the wagon; and when I got there I found old Molly eating away in the stable. And them was the first and last puffed sleeves I ever made, and the last I ever *would* have made, even if I had n't give up the dressmaking business and gone to preaching the next fall, and traded off my store for this house I got now. And whenever I see anybody I think a heap of, like I do you, wearing them big puffed sleeves, look like it goes clean to my heart, and I always feel called to warn 'em, and tell 'em what Ezekiel says on that line."



MARY ALICE'S EMANCIPATION



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“**H**E Bible 's mighty near right,” said Mrs. Melissa Allgood, bringing her rocking-chair to a standstill, and shutting her Bible with a snap, “when it says religion come not to bring peace but a sword. That 's certainly the way it 's been here at the Station. Now, there 's Mary Alice Welden and her husband. Mary Alice Welden she got sanctification amongst the first here,— or thought she got it. But somehow she was mighty quiet about it, and laid mighty low. After the first two or three meetings she would n't get up and testify none, or do no shouting. Did n't seem to have the joy in her soul. I thought I knew what was at the bottom of it. Dick Welden he 's a member of the Baptist Church in good standing, and *of course* he ain't a sanctification man. If anything does rile his soul, it is to see anybody get up and shout and tell what full-salvation

and holiness has done for them. You see, he has n't got the blessing himself, and don't allow there is any such a thing. Dick Welden he 's young, *and* a Baptist, and he thinks he knows it all.

“ Well, I just suspicioned how things was, and one Tuesday morning I done up my ironing early and went over to Mary Alice Welden's. I found her washing, her little Philury having had spazzums the day before, so I set out in the back yard and kept up the fire under the kettle where the clothes was boiling, and talked to her while she washed. We talked about other things, and by and by I led up to the state of her soul. I asked her if she was still happy in the Lord. She said she was. ‘ Well, Mary Alice,’ I says, ‘ if you got the joy of religion, you ought not to let it be unbeknownst,’ I says. ‘ The Bible says to let your light so shine, and not to hide it under a bushel,’ I says. ‘ Why don't you never shout or testify no more?’

“ She wrung and shook out one of Dick Welden's shirts, and then she says, ‘ Sist' All-good,’ she says, ‘ it ain't because I don't *want* to, the Lord knows. I 've been terrible puzzled in my mind,’ she says, ‘ on that line.’ She

hung up the shirt on the clothes-line, and come and set down on the wood-pile by me. 'Dick Welden,' she says, 'is a Baptist. He 's against shouting. He can't stand to hear anybody shout. He says he won't live with a shouting woman. He says I *sha'n't* shout. Now the point is, must I mind my husband or my religion? The preachers they says, "Shout." All the sanctified says, "Shout." My own soul says, "Shout." But my husband *he* says, "You *sha'n't* shout!" There I am. Now, what does the Bible say? "But I 'd have you know that the head of every woman is the man," and "Wives, obey your husbands." There I am, Sister Melissy. My husband *he* says I *sha'n't* shout, but if I *must* shout I got to shut the doors and do my shouting at home, and keep silence in the church. And the worst of it, Sister Melissy, *he* 's got Bible on me for that.'

"'What Bible?' I says.

"'Whenever I get to argufying him on that line, he takes down the Bible and reads from I Corinthians, xiv.: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also

saith the law. And if they want to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the churches."

" 'Mary Alice,' I says, 'prob'ly you ain't never had the meaning of that scripture made plain to you,' I says, 'and Dick Welden has took advantage of your ignorance and perverted it to suit himself,' I says. 'The devil himself can't be beat quoting Scripture,' I says. 'Now I 'll expound it to you,' I says. 'In them days when Paul was living, the women never had no education or religion or nothing, like we got nowadays, and was just plumb worldly and frivolous, and about as poor shakes as the devil himself could wish to see. They'd dike out in their best, and go to church with their husbands; and whilst their husbands set over quiet and attentive on their side the church, trying to hear the Word and follow the preacher, the women-folks set on *their* side, a-whispering and norating about their children, and the help, and this-a-one's new spring bonnet, and that-a-one's back hair, and another's Indy shawl and new black silk dress, and wondering how much it cost, and if it was paid for, and kept up such another buzzing

and discussing that the preacher did n't know, no more 'n the congregation, what he *was* saying. Paul he had had some experience on that line, and had been worried no little in his sermons, and it natchully riled him, and he had to admonish the women-folks consid'-able. And that was what he meant by saying the women must keep silence in the churches, and that it was a shame for 'em to talk in church. If the women-folks in them days had had anything fit to say,' I says, 'I don't believe even Paul himself would have been the man to hold 'em back.

"'I got another notion about Paul, too,' I says, 'though I can't say I 'm exactly up-held by Scripture. You know Paul is pretty hard on the women-folks all the way through,' I says, 'and always talking about them being upstreperous, and being kept under, and sub-ject to obedience. Now I would n't be sur-prised, Mary Alice, if Paul did n't have some *reason* for his hard feelings. You know he was a bachelor all his life,' I says, 'and you know he says himself he was mean and small of stature, and his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible; and who knows,' I says, 'but what, in his young days,

before he got religion, he might have been disappointed in love?' I says. 'That always makes men feel bitter against women-folks,' I says, 'and you *never* heard a bachelor say a good word for a woman in your life,' I says. 'So I always feel like making allowance for what Paul says, and not taking it too earnest,' I says. 'When Paul talks so much about women being subject to obedience and being kept under, he was most likely taking his spite out on 'em, on account of that woman that went back on him,' I says.

"Mary Alice said she never thought about that; that she never was much at making out Scripture, noways.

"'Well, that 's my belief,' I says, 'and I don't see anything unreasonable in it; and if you study about it a while,' I says, 'you 'll see it just like I do. Of course, it ain't in reason to expect the *men*-folks to see it thataway,' I says, 'because it ain't to their interest. But women 's got just as much right to make out the Bible to suit themselves as men has, and what 's more, they got just as much right to get up and testify and talk and preach in church, and shout and glorify God, as the men, and going to be held accountable if they

don't. *I* say they ain't any more obliged to obey their husbands than their husbands is them,— and especially when their husbands is unregenerate and Baptist, like *your* husband. You ain't no bond-slave,' I says, 'and if I was you, Mary Alice Welden,' I says, 'I 'd just get up there in church next Sunday and show Dick Welden what kind of obedience *I* had.'

" Mary Alice she say she bless the Lord for sending me over. She say she believe I was right. She say she believe she would get up next Sunday and just shout till fare-you-well, and show Dick Welden what sort of stuff she was made of. I told her she better pray earnest over it, and not to say nothing till she made up her mind. I told her I 'd pray for her, and went home.

" Next Sunday when I went in church I seen Mary Alice Welden setting up in the amen corner, looking mighty determinated. Her hair being red made her look more so. Mary Alice she 's pretty tall and big around, but got the shortest little arms you ever seen,— just like a young gosling. I never did see how she could make out to lift her children or do her washing with them arms. Well, she had them little elbows braced out like she

meant business. I went up and set right behind her. Dick Welden he was setting back on the men's side. It was n't his church, but he always come to meeting with her to see she did n't do no shouting.

"After preaching, Brother Cheatham called on them that felt like saying a word for the Lord, or telling their experience, to get up and do so, and he say, 'Who 'll set the ball a-rolling?' Mary Alice she was up and talking before he could fairly get the words out of his mouth. She say *she* got a few words to say, and she 'd say 'em or bust. She say she 'd kept her joy and religion shut up in her heart so long it had pretty nigh spoilt, and to-day she was just going to turn herself loose, she give 'em full warning! She say the devil had stopped her mouth with his lies long enough. She say the devil had worked on her in more ways than one, but most by perverting Scripture in the mouth of them that was near and dear to her. She say she seen through his deceiving now, glory to God, and seen things right, and the devil was n't nowheres with her no more. She say she had n't had a real good shout since she could recollect; but, bless the Lord, she calculate to have one to-day! And

with that she hoisted them little arms up above her head and clapped her hands and give such another whoop it would have done your soul good to hear! It just set pretty near everybody in the house to shouting. Mary Alice she 's got a powerful voice. I looked over to the men's side, where Dick Welden set. He was looking at Mary Alice, just plumb black in the face. Mary Alice she seen him look at her, and she just bat her eyes and wave them little arms and say the devil he could just stand up on his hind feet and shake his horns, but shout she would, *Glo-ry to God!* Then she turned loose again, and hollered fit to kill, and laughed the holy laugh between times. I was that happy over it I was shouting pretty near as loud as Mary Alice myself, and we just had the biggest time we 'd had since holiness convention. There was a regular awakening, and old Mis' Ger-ton, that had been swinging out on the promise for six months, she got sanctification before church was out.

“ I just natchully looked for Dick Welden to pick up and leave Mary Alice *that* quick. But when we got to the church door, there he stood a-waiting, as meek as Moses. If you

believe me, that man look like he done shrunk up three or four inches. Mary Alice she just jerked him by the arm and gallivanted him home in no time. And since then he ain't said 'Baptist' once; and there ain't a nicer, meeker, more obedient husband in the Station than Dick Welden."

THE ARARAT CACTUS COMPANY

THE ARARAT CACTUS COMPANY

MRS. MELISSA ALLGOOD and I sat in her kitchen peeling apples. She dropped a naked white apple into the pan at her left, and paused to brush up with the back of her hand the tiny little curls that had escaped from their straightness, and lay damp on her forehead. Her round, happy face was marked by no single line of care, nor telltale wrinkle under the kind eyes. A white lawn wrapper with small black polka-dots enveloped her plump figure, and over that she wore a long white apron. Everything about her was spotlessly clean and freshly ironed. The little cottage, with its three rooms and shed kitchen, was as clean and wholesome as its owner.

“There’s a heap of wickedness going on in the world,” she began. “More than you’d believe. Last September Sister Pen Jobe stopped by to see me on her way from holi-

ness meeting at Sandersville, and commenced telling about the General Holiness Convention that was to be held down at Reelfoot, in Tennessee, the middle of November, and how she was going, and how the sanctified was to meet there from Kentucky and Georgia and Texas, and all over the country, and have a regular hallelujah time, the biggest that ever was. And she say she got to leave Brother Jobe at home to take care of the children, and did n't have nobody to go with her, and she say, 'Sist' Allgood, I expect you 'd enjoy going, and I 'd be mighty glad to have your company.' 'Well, I reckon I would,' I says; 'but don't count on me, Sister Jobe,' I says, 'because I ain't got no money to go on, now I 've come out of Sodom and quit the dressmaking business; and if the Lord don't send me some money I won't be able to go,' I says. Sister Jobe she say the round trip was eight dollars, and she think it would be worth a heap more to my soul. I told her I thought so too, and I 'd commence right away to pray for some money to go on; that I knew the Lord could provide a way.

"So I set right in to praying; and look like the more I prayed the more I wanted to

go. 'Lord,' I says, 'you just must make a way for me to go, somehow,' I says. 'I know you can do it, Lord, if you 're a mind to, and I 'm looking for it.' And the very night I commenced praying, I had one of the biggest blessings that ever was. Seem like a voice said, just as plain as I 'm talking now, 'You 'll get to go to the Convention!' And after that I felt plumb easy and happy about it, and just rode out on the promise.

"Well, next day I went up to Bundy's store to get my mail, and Tommy T. Nickins handed me out 'The Narrow Path.' I took it home, and set right down to read it through. When I come to the last page, I seen a big advertisement up in one corner, all about the Ararat Cactus Company, of Cash Point, Texas. It was in great big letters, and said they was making a special offer; that the year before they had sent a' agent over to the Holy Land, and he dug up a cactus plant off of Mount Ararat, and brought it back home; and said that cactus plants was so long-lived that there was n't no earthly doubt but this one had been there ever since the Flood; that four thousand years was n't no time for a cactus to live. They said they done watered

and tended it till it was growing fine, and they was now able to offer cuttings from it to them that wanted 'em at sixty-five cents apiece, special price, though they was certainly worth anyhow a dollar and a half to earnest Christians. They say send sixty-five cents to 'em and get a' Ararat cactus. They say they also got another big offer to make; that being anxious to introduce Ararat cactuses to all Christian homes, they wanted to get personal letters about 'em, and that anybody that would send sixty-five cents and get one of them Ararat cactuses had the chance open to 'em of making twenty-five or thirty dollars a week by writing letters about it. They say they was willing to pay ten cents for every letter. Say the letters need n't be too praising, but just what folks really thought, and the shorter they was the better. Say they 'd pay the same rate for a whole lot of copies of the same letter; that they wanted to send 'em to folks all over the country, and did n't matter if they was the same.

“ ‘ Well, bless the Lord! ’ I says. ‘ Here’s the way right open for me to go to Convention! Well, hallelujah! ’ And I mailed sixty-five cents to them Ararat Cactus people that

day, and a letter telling them to send the cactus right off.

“Look like I could n’t breathe easy or settle down to anything till that Ararat cactus come. I give it a week’s time, and then I commenced to keep the street pretty hot between me and Bundy’s. Finally it come. I was kind of surprised when I unwrapped it, it was so little and ornery, and no bigger than a hickory-nut. It was growing in a little two-cent flower-pot. ‘What on earth can I write about such a measly-looking thing and tell the truth?’ I says. But you know the Bible says, ‘Who hath despised the day of small things?’ and the more I thought about it, and how that cactus come clean across the ocean, and all the way from Mount Ararat, and done been there ever since the Flood, the better I felt, and the more like I had n’t thrown away them sixty-five cents.

“I commenced on the letters right away. I went right back to Bundy’s store, and bought me a dollar’s worth of writing-paper and a new pen. Tommy T. Nickins he asked me how much paper I want, and when I say about a dollar’s worth, he looked plumb surprised, and I seen he had his suspicions. He

reached his hand in the show-case and pulled out a box of paper that had a bouquet of blue and pink flowers all across the page, and he said maybe I 'd rather have that than the plain paper. I looked at him mighty straight. 'Tommy T.,' I says, 'you need n't be getting out no such as that for the likes of a widow woman like me,' I says, 'and sanctified. Give me the plain paper,' I says, looking at him right stern. I knew it was n't no particular use, though, trying to go against Tommy T. Nickins's suspicions ; and sure enough, before night it was all over the Station that I was writing every day to a widower down in Georgia, and about to step off.

"Well, I commenced on the letters. Folks always said I had a consid'able talent for writing, and I knew I wrote a tol'able nice hand, and easy to read. So I never had much trouble with the letters. I had wrote a heap of letters to 'The Narrow Path' about my experiences, and it was n't hard for me to find the words. I wrote ten different letters, saying about the same thing, and as praising as I could in reason, but wording them different; and then I turned in and made fourteen copies of each one of them. That made

a hundred and fifty letters. It took me all the week to do 'em, getting up at sunrise and working all day. Of course I wanted 'em all to look nice, and I'd spoil a good many. At last, when Saturday evening come, I had 'em all done, and was plumb wore out. But I laid them all together, nice and flat, and done them up in good strong paper, and sent 'em off in the evening mail to the Ararat Cactus Company, asking them please to send me the fifteen dollars right away, that I was in a big hurry for it, so's I could get ready to go to General Holiness Convention.

"Sister Pen Jobe come to the Station to church the next day, and I told her after preaching that she could count on me going to Convention with her, that the Lord had made a way, just like I thought he would. And Sister Jobe come and eat dinner with me, and we talked pretty near all day about what we was going to do at Convention, and what a big time we'd have. 'It'll take eight dollars to take me there and back,' I says, 'and I'll have seven dollars over and above,' I says, 'to buy me a new dress with, and a winter hat. Because, of course, Sister Jobe,' I says, 'I don't want you or nobody to be

ashamed of me, and the Bible says to do everything decent and in order, and if I go to Convention at all,' I says, 'I want to go decent and in order.' And we kept on talking about the joy and refreshment we was going to get in our souls. And I told Sister Jobe it would n't surprise me if I was to swing out at the Convention, that I 'd felt called to preach a long time, but look like I need some big outpouring to set me a-going, and I expect to get it at the Convention.

"It was still pretty near a month till Convention, and I says to myself, 'I 'll give them Ararat Cactus folks two weeks. The fifteen dollars ought by rights to get here in ten days,' I says, 'but I 'll give 'em two weeks. It 's a long ways,' I says, 'clean from Texas to Kentucky.' So I waited tol'able patient the first ten days. Then I commenced tracking up to Bundy's after every train, and every time I says to Tommy T., 'Any letters for me?' I expect to see him look in the pigeon-hole and hand me out a good, big, fat letter with the fifteen dollars in it, and my heart beat right fast while he was looking. But every time he say, 'No 'm,' and every day he drop his voice a little lower and sadder and

more consoling-like, and Tommy T. Nickins is mighty romantic, and I seen he got some more suspicions. And pretty soon all the Station folks commenced to look at me kind of sidewise and consoling, and Mary Alice Welden she come over one day to borrow some bluing, and kep' a-talking about it not being no use to put any dependence in men, specially widowers, and it was n't worth while to expect any better things of 'em. She say she think one of the best things Solomon ever said was to 'Trust no man.' I wondered what she was driving at, and more than ever at Mary Alice Welden driving at anything. She generally hits the nail square on the head. I never said nothing, but next day old Mis' Gerton come to spend the day, and up and consoled me, without making any bones, about that widower down in Georgia, and him a preacher too, and got seven children, and done been married three times and ought to know better, going back on me and the wedding-day set! Well, I was mad enough to bust,—righteous mad, of course,—and I told old Mis' Gerton my opinions of them that can't find nothing better to do than go about telling lies and slanders. And she say she

got it straight from Sister Gilly Jones, that got it straight from Tommy T. Nickins's ma.

"Well, every day I thought sure that letter would come. I just worried and worried and prayed and prayed, till I pretty near got thin. I did n't wonder at folks thinking that preacher done flirted me. Look like I was plumb set on going to that Convention. 'Lord,' I says, 'surely you will let that fifteen dollars come to-morrow! It would n't be right to disappoint me after giving me that showing I 'd get to go,' I says, 'and especially when I feel like I just need this Convention to set me to preaching!' I says.

"One day, just about a week before Convention, Mis' Barnes come over to see me; and she looked so hungry and down in the mouth, and Velorous Barnes such a shiftless man, that I asked her to stay to dinner, that I got some nice spare-ribs Brother Rolly McKittrick been killing hogs and sent me, and some nice turnips and things, and I think maybe she 'd enjoy 'em. Well, I reckon she did. She seemed to take a heap of comfort, and to have a real nice time. After dinner I was showing her my new rag-carpet in the front room, and she run up on that Ararat

cactus sitting in the window. 'Law!' she says, 'the idea of anybody raising cactus! Why, they just burn it up in Texas. When we was down there last year we made bonfires of it. It finally run us out. Where on earth did you get the ornery thing?' she says. I told her how I got it from them Ararat Cactus Company people for sixty-five cents, and she just laid back and fairly hollered till she cried! I never seen Mis' Barnes laugh before, and she taken it so hard it made me feel plumb queer. 'The idea,' she says, 'of your being took in thataway! You 're old enough to know better, Melissy Allgood!' She just laughed and laughed. I could n't see what she was laughing at. 'Them men, them Ararat Cactus men, is smart ones,' she says. 'They done made fifty-seven cents clear off of you,' she says, 'It never cost them nothing but the postage and the pot!'

"I thought I would n't tell her about them letters I had wrote, and I 've always been glad I did n't. I commenced studying about it, and the more I studied the more riled I got. Still I did n't give up hopes entire, after that showing I had had, and kept going to the post-office once every day till Friday come,

the day before we was to start to Convention. When I did n't get no letter or no fifteen dollars on Friday, I just set down and wrote them Ararat Cactus Company people a letter.

"I told 'em I reckon they done received my letters that it taken me a whole week to write, not counting the forty cents' worth of postage I had to put on 'em, and the dollar's worth of paper, and the new pen, and which I had to borrow the money from ma to pay for 'em all. I told 'em I had n't received no answer, and supposed I never would,—not to speak of them fifteen dollars which by rights they owed me for them letters, and which I had been a-counting on to carry me to Holiness Convention. I told 'em I never would have believed, if I had n't run right up on 'em myself, that there was such deceivers and evil doers in the world as they was, 'taking bread out of the mouth of the widow and orphan, full of cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive, yea, their throat is an open sepulchre, and the poison of asps is under their lips.' I told 'em I never expected to live to see the day when I 'd lose one dollar and forty-five cents of ma's, and a whole week's work, by the ungodliness of

men, 'me being a widow woman,' I says, 'and sanctified, and living righteous and godly. I 've put my trust in man,' I says, 'for the *last* time. Maybe you all don't know, or have forgot,' I says, 'what the Scripture says: "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." "The name of the wicked shall rot." And I hope,' I says, 'that you ain't trusting too much in the riches you getting by your ungodliness, for "the getting of treasure by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death," and "the robbery of the wicked shall destroy them." Repent of the evil way before it is everlasting too late,' I says, 'for "a lying tongue is but for a moment,"' I says. 'May you turn from your wickedness and live, is the prayer of yours, truly sanctified, Melissy Allgood.'

"I wrote that letter, and another one to 'The Narrow Path,' telling what sort of limbs them Ararat Cactus people was, and sent 'em off in the evening mail. And then I went back home and cried. Look like I never was so plumb outdone. If I had n't had that showing I 'd get to go, I would n't have felt so bad. But I never had one of them showings to

fail me, and I 'd just been resting on the promise. 'Lord,' I says, 'the very idea of your letting the devil hold me back from Holiness Convention like that!' I says. 'The very idea of him rampaging around deceiving the very elect!' I says. 'Lord,' I says, 'why don't you smite him hip and thigh?'

"Next morning I got up early, to clean up before Sister Jobe come, and look like it plumb mortified me to have to tell her I could n't go, that the Lord done failed me. Sister Jobe she felt awful about it, and said she think it 's a mighty funny thing, the Lord going back on me thataway. I had early dinner for her, as the train was going at 12:30. We was pretty near through eating when little Ab Cheatham, the preacher's boy, come running in the back door, and said his pa done step off the porch and twist his ankle bad, and would n't I like to go to Convention on the ticket he done bought? He said his pa wanted somebody to stand for the Station. Well, I just out with such another shout! 'Bless the Lord!' I says, 'for answering prayer!' Sister Jobe she turned loose, too. And I just got into my old black dress and hat in about two minutes, and you bet I never took any time to primp!

"Well, of all the full-salvation times that ever was, we had 'em at that Convention. You never seen such an outpouring! I could talk a week about it. And, sure enough, like I told Sister Jobe, I swung out then and there, and been preaching off and on ever since. You never seen such hallelujah folks in your life, and so much liberty. Look like my soul was so full of joy it would certainly bust! That was just the way I felt all the week I was there.

"A day or two after I got back home, here come a letter for me. I seen it was from them Ararat Cactus Company folks. 'Dear Madam,' it says, 'your esteemed letter received, and read with much interest. We know we're sinners,' it says, 'but we hope to get there just the same, if you keep on praying for us!'"

THE CUB RUN OUTPOURING



THE CUB RUN OUTPOURING

 TOLD you about swinging out at Holiness Convention last November," said Mrs. Melissa Allgood, as she leisurely tore carpet rags into narrow strips, sewed the ends together, and rolled them into large balls. "Well, after anybody has swung out and preached once, they don't want to set down and hold their hands forevermore. After I got courage to get up and take my first text, look like I waxed bold to pull down the strongholds of Satan; and when I had to set down here at the Station all winter, and never got no calls or nothing, I never liked it a bit. That's the way with the devil, you know. When he can't get you no other way, he 'll try you on the hurry line. Young preachers are always eat up with their own zeal, seems like, and think the Lord needs them out hustling for Him; and they got to get patience by the hardest kind of knocks. So here I set all winter and spring.

"But along in June here come a letter from Brother Cox, at Bowling Green, telling me to come down and join the Holiness Band he was making up, and said come down on the train and meet 'em at Bowling Green the next Friday. I just more than blessed the Lord, and lit right in and borrowed ten dollars from ma, and put out, plumb happy. When I got there Brother Cox took me up to his house. There was four or five others of the Band waiting there to start out next day, that Brother Cox made me acquainted with. One of 'em was a young lady about twenty-nine years old named Sister Belle Keen. I never liked her a bit at first. She was mighty tall and straight, and stepped pretty high, and held her head up considable, and had a terrible convicting eye. Every time she looked at me that first day I pretty near jumped out of my skin, and if I had n't *knowed* I was sanctified and saved, I'd have thought I was the chieft of sinners. That was just the way she made you feel. Of course that was all right out in the work; but I did think she might have looked humbler in that house where everybody was preachers, and just as godly and sanctified as she was. But I soon

found out there was n't no humble nowheres about Sister Belle.

"That night after supper Brother Cox said he was going to divide us up, and send half of us one way, and half the other. I says to myself, 'I hope I ain't going the way Sister Belle Keen goes.' But he went on, 'Sister Porter and Brother Smith and me will go to Poolville, and Sister Keen and Sister Allgood and Brother Singleton to Cub Run. There's two tents,' he says, 'and I take it we ought to spread over as much ground as we can, and preach the gospel to all creatures.'

"So early next morning we set out, Brother Cox and them to Poolville, and me and Sister Belle and Brother Singleton to Cub Run. Cub Run is in the neighborhood of Mammoth Cave. That's a place that lots of folks come to see. Maybe you've heard of it. If I'd had any money I might have stopped off to see it myself; but Brother Singleton said he was there once, and it was n't anything to look at—just a big hole in the ground. Brother Cox had wrote a letter to a cousin of his at Cub Run that we was coming there to carry on a meeting, and for him to see that we was taken care of. Brother Cox he told us beforehand

that Cub Run was a mighty cold place, and if there ever had been any religion there it was froze out now. So when we stepped off the train, here come a man and asked if we was the preachers. Sister Belle she says that's what we call ourselves. The man says his name was Mayhew, and that he was Brother Cox's cousin, and he believe we expect to stay at his house while we was there. Sister Belle she say we never expect nothing — we just take what comes, and put up with it. Brother Mayhew he never had any more to say, but just picked up my valise — Brother Singleton was carrying Sister Belle's and his'n — and led the way to the wagon. Brother Mayhew he lived a mile out of Cub Run. We could see the folks poke their heads out to look at us as we went through town. The women would throw their aprons over their heads and run to the gate to see us, like we was a circus. Look like we was plumb curiosities to 'em. I reckon they never heard tell of a woman preacher before. Cub Run was n't much of a town in size; there was three saloons and one church, and some stores. But I tell you the devil can make himself mighty big in mighty little room.

"Finally we got to Brother Mayhew's. It was the finest kind of a house, setting up on a hill, and all painted up new, and seven or eight rooms in it. It was a hot day outdoors, but the minute I struck that house, the cold chills commenced running up and down my back. Brother Mayhew he took us in the parlor and told us to make ourselves at home. There was lace curtains, and a bought carpet on the floor, and considerable style. 'Sister Belle,' I says, after he went out, 'I 'm afraid there ain't much heart-felt religion in this here house,' I says. Sister Belle she nodded her head right hard, and then Brother Singleton nodded his. I could see pretty plain by that time, without trying to, that Brother Singleton was dead in love with Sister Belle; but she never paid no more attention to him than if he was a little fice dog. Brother Singleton was a pale, puny young man, and was converted under Sister Belle's preaching down in Tennessee; and it ain't for me to say, but I always felt like Brother Singleton would n't have felt no particular call to preach if it had n't been for his wanting to follow Sister Belle around.

"Pretty soon Brother Mayhew come in with his wife, and she shook hands with us

kind of freezing-like, and asked us out to dinner. There was a great long table, and loads of things on it. And I tell you it took a big table for Brother Mayhew's family. There was nine children at home, two or three of 'em grown up, and then all the way down to a six-year-old. They was a real good-looking family. Brother Mayhew he asked the longest blessing you ever heard, and told the Lord how much pleasure it give him to entertain godly people at his table, and divide his mite with 'em. Some folks would have thought he was a terrible righteous man. But he had n't more than got through and commenced to slice the ham before Sister Belle she fix her eye on him and say 'Brother, are you *saved*?' He kind of give a jump and straighten himself up, and he says, 'I been a member of the church for thirty years!' 'Yes, brother,' she says, 'but are you *saved*?' The children commenced to open their eyes and look at their pa. He turned red in the face and he says, 'I been a deacon in the church for twenty years!' 'Yes, brother,' Sister Belle says, mighty patient, 'but I asked you if you was *saved*.' 'I give a hundred dollars totes building the church in Cub Run,' he

says, 'and boarded the preacher two years for nothing.' 'Yes, brother,' she says, 'but I don't want to know what you *done*,' she says, 'but what you *are*. I want to know if you been born again in the Spirit,—if you got the evidence of salvation to the uttermost in you?' Brother Mayhew said he reckon he was about as saved as the next one,—that he reckon his religion was good enough for anybody. He said if she meant was he *sanctified*, he was glad to say he did n't set no store on no such foolishness as *that*. He say far be it from him to set himself up as full of the Spirit, and better than other folks, and not doing no sin. He say he was a humble man, and knowed he was n't better than lots of folks, and he prayed the Lord to keep him thataway, and from falling into the snares of pride. He say he did n't want to hurt our feelings, but he bund to be honest with his opinions. Sister Belle she told him not to worry about our *feelings*, that feelings was a part of the carnal nature, and we done had the carnal mind and the Old Adam took out of us too long ago to talk about, and been enjoying the experience of entire sanctification and indwelling of holiness ever since !

“ Brother Cox had sent our tent by freight, and it never got there that day, and the next day being Sunday we could n’t set it up; so we all went to church with Brother and Sister Mayhew in the wagon. The whole family was fixed up fit to kill. I never seen as many ribbons and beads and things as them girls had on—and Sister Mayhew too; and they all had the whitening piled on thick. One of the girls was a mighty pretty little thing, about eighteen years old, named Mary Lou. I took a big liking to that child, though she was awful sassy, and just made fun of everything. And when I seen her all diked out thataway, it just went to my heart. When we went in church, we could hear the folks a-whispering and talking about us. Brother Mayhew’s folks set way up in the amen corner, so the people got a good look at us. And of all the cold, wet-blanket places that ever was, that church was the worst. The choir done all the singing, and the preacher done all the talking. There was n’t no testimony, or experience, or *nothing*. If a Christian went away from there feeling any better, or a sinner went away feeling any worse, I don’t know it. There was n’t no gospel about it.

Sister Belle she give herself a shake while we was waiting for the wagon after church, and she say to me if there ever was a' ungodly place, she believe it was Cub Run. She say she did n't believe there was a thimbleful of heart-felt religion in town, and if there was it done run to seed. She say the devil was fairly kicking up his heels here, and specially inside the church. She say we got a big battle to fight, and she intend to give it to 'em hard. And Sister Belle 's a straight-out-from-the-shoulder woman, I tell you, and I knew them folks would catch it.

"Early next morning Brother Singleton and Sister Belle and me went into Cub Run to fix up the tent. It was a round tent that Brother Cox had bought cheap from a circus that went broke at Bowling Green. Brother Singleton he got a nigger, and they set it up. Of course there was n't any chairs, so Brother Singleton he bought a lot of second-hand planks, and drove stobs in the ground, and nailed the planks across the top of them for seats. We had a big dry-goods box for a pulpit, and spread a wagon-load of straw all around it, to the first row of seats, for the mourners. It took us all day to get the tent

fixed up. The Cub Run folks they 'd stand around and watch. That night we had the first meeting. We had to go a mile and back to Brother Mayhew's to supper, and when we come back to the tent it was already half full, and the people a-giggling and nudging each other. Sister Belle she say she knew mighty well they just come there to hear the women preachers preach, and she ain't going to please 'em that much, and Brother Singleton got to preach that night. So we had praying and singing, and then Brother Singleton he started out to preach. But, as I said, Brother Singleton 's kind of weak and puny, and has n't got no power, though he comes in mighty nice on the singing; and first thing I knew there was Sister Belle up and brushing Brother Singleton to one side, just a-pounding on that goods box and fairly roasting them people about their sins. She told 'em just what they was, and what the Lord thought of such as them. She told 'em she could see Satan's tracks all over town; and not only in the three saloons, she said, but in the church itself. She said the devil never felt quite so happy as when he got hold of a lukewarm church member. She fairly laid it off to them.

“Next night every seat was full, and the people just craning their necks. Sister Belle and me both preached, and told our experience, and shouted. Sister Belle she told them she heard that morning that some folks said she talked queer the night before. She said she might talk queer, but look like it brought all the sinners out to hear her, and now she got 'em in range she going to shoot 'em with the gospel gun. And she commenced on 'em again. I thought I never seen anybody have as much power as Sister Belle. I did n't see how any sinner could set under her eye without being convicted. But them Cub Run folks held out wonderful. Every night they'd crowd in, and some come in from ten and fifteen miles in the country. One old lady she walked ten miles barefoot, carrying her shoes to save 'em; and she say she was bound to see them women preachers, even if she had to *wear* them shoes instead of carry 'em, and which she never expect to have another pair of shoes in her life. The folks they just carried on and made all manner of fun of us, and the devil went about on a regular hurrah, telling lies about me and Sister Belle. Sister Belle say she seen he was calling out all his

hosts, but it just made her spirits rise; that the victory 'd be all the more glorious. They commenced to treat us so cold at Brother Mayhew's that Sister Belle and me asked the Lord to get us another home, right quick, and sure enough the next day old Sister Moss at Cub Run — a mighty poor old lady, but mighty good — come up and give us a invite to stay at her house a while. And Sister Belle and me left Brother Mayhew's fine house rejoicing in our hearts. All I hated about it was leaving little Mary Lou. She was full of mischief, but I seen she had a heap of good in her, and my heart yearned over her.

“Sunday there was three or four hundred people come to hear us. You never seen the like of crowds. Sister Belle she never stopped firing away at 'em. I reckon there never was such a full-salvation woman anywheres. She 'd get up there and take a tune and just make up songs as she went along. When I first got acquainted with Sister Belle, I thought she was right ugly; but when she 'd get up there in that pulpit, and lay it off to them sinners, and tell what the Lord had done for her, and get to shouting and testifying, I thought there never was anybody as beautiful as she

was. Her face would be just glorified. And when she 'd make up them songs and just fill up the whole tent with 'em, I did n't wonder at the sinners rolling in to hear her. What I did wonder at was their holding out so long. I knew in reason them sinners and church members was bound to be under conviction. But when a whole week passed, and none of 'em had made a break for the altar, the courage commenced to ooze out of me. But Sister Belle said she was trusting in the Lord, and not a bit discouraged, though she must say she never seen such a stiff-necked, deep-dyed generation anywheres before. She say she had preached three years up in the mountains, where there was n't a church or school-house for fifty mile; but she say she never seen the devil so rampant anywhere as at Cub Run. She say she 'd had a many a battle with him, and expect to have a many a more, glory to God, but she look to have the victory every time,—that she got the promise for it.

"So she never let down a bit, but just give it to the sinners a little harder every night. I would just set there and shake sometimes, listening to Sister Belle's sermons. Every

night I looked to see them people get down on the ground and fairly howl over their sins. I just knew they was deep convicted. Their eyes got to looking mighty uneasy. But they too proud to come out and say they sinners. Brother Mayhew and some of his family would come every night; but they the stiff-neckest people in the tent, and the girls always dressed as fine as fiddles, and Sister Mayhew too. The people would giggle half the time in meeting, and act as silly as could be. I knew by that they was trying to throw off the conviction. You know that 's the way with the devil.

"One night, after we 'd been there nearly two weeks, look like me and Sister Belle could n't get to sleep no way at all. We had n't broke up meeting till after ten o'clock, and Sister Belle she had fairly chewed them people up that night. When we got back to Sister Moss's we was too excited to sleep. Sister Moss had a log house, with one room and a shed kitchen downstairs, and a loft room upstairs; and me and Sister Belle had the loft room. Sister Belle she 'd kneel down and pray a while, and then she 'd jump up and walk the floor a while. She said she

knew nearly everybody in that town was under deep conviction, and had been for a week ; but they such limbs of Satan they ashamed to say so, and all of 'em afraid to make the first break, and waiting for somebody else to lead off. She said she seen the devil was fairly raring and pitching and shaking his horns, but she expect to see him bite the dust in mighty short time, and she expect to be in at the death. Then she 'd walk the floor some more, and then she 'd stop and hunt fleas a while. You know we had that wagon-load of straw all around the altar, ready for the mourners, and me and Sister Belle would stomp around in it and get plumb full of fleas. Seem like they never worried me so much ; but they took to Sister Belle like a duck to water. Sister Belle said she spent her days fighting sin, and her nights fighting fleas, but she expect to get to a place some day where there was n't no pests of *no* kind, hallelujah !

"That night about twelve o'clock, while Sister Belle was walking the floor, we heard some horses come down the street a-galloping, and stop in front of Sister Moss's. The light was still burning in our room ; and somebody hollered for us to come to the window

quick. Sister Belle poked her head out. It was Abner Mayhew. 'You all put on your clothes right quick!' he says. 'Mary Lou's under conviction and about to die! I brought John mule and the colt for you. She's having fits right along, and mighty near dead!' Sister Belle give a big shout and I give another. We just got into our clothes. Abner he said he'd go by and get Brother Singleton, who was setting up with an old sick man in Cub Run. Sister Belle and me mounted John mule and the colt bareback, and made that mile in pretty near as short time as it takes to tell it, and Brother Singleton he come through the fields. When we got in half a mile we could hear the hollering and crying. We went in a-shouting. Mary Lou was laying across her pa's lap, as cold as ice, and plumb stiff. Every now and then she'd have a fit, and just twist herself all up in a knot. Her pa he'd try to hold her still, but she'd throw out her arms and holler, 'Lost! Lost!' and all the family'd holler and cry and pray. When Mary Lou seen me and Sister Belle she called out for us to pray for her, pray for her! And Sister Belle and me did n't lose no time about it. I never was so happy in my

life. I felt like I could pray a hundred sinners into salvation. And then Brother Singleton he come in, too, and set to praying. In about half an hour Mary Lou commenced to ease down and feel her sins forgive, and pretty soon she raised a shout and give thanks for full and free salvation. And by that time everybody else in that family was under deepest conviction. Brother Mayhew was weaving back and forth in his chair, just a-groaning, and Sister Mayhew was laid out across the foot of the bed, and the other eight children was laying around on the floor and the chairs, all of them crying and mourning over their sins. Sister Mayhew and the girls was mourning over treating us so cold and making so much fun of us, and over all the rest of their sins; and Brother Mayhew was saying he seen he never had no heart-felt religion,—that he knew it as soon as Sister Belle cast her eye on him that first day, but the devil was bound he should n't get down and say so. He said for us not to stop praying a minute for his salvation and justification; that he was a miserable sinner that been trusting in the church to carry him through safe. They just had it! I never saw the beat of it. Then

they commenced to come through, one by one, and feel their sins washed away, and get happy. And by two o'clock the last one of that family, even the six-year-old, was rejoicing in full and free salvation, and converted and justified, and all seeking the second blessing of entire sanctification. And of all the shouting ever you heard, we done it.

"They wanted us to stay all night; but Sister Belle said we 'd have to be getting back to town. So Abner went out a-shouting to bring John mule and the colt, and Sister Belle and me got on. It was the brightest kind of moonlight, and about 2.30 in the morning. The whole family followed us down through the corn-field to the big gate, praising the Lord. When we got pretty near to the big gate, Sister Belle she threw up her hands and give a big shout. 'Glory!' she says. 'We 'll carry the testimony down to Cub Run! We 'll show forth the power of the Lord in the stronghold of Satan!' Everybody set up another shout. 'We 'll march down to victory!' she says. 'We ain't got no palm-branches like them of Jerusalem, or no olive-branches like them of Bethany; but, hallelujah, the Lord ain't no respecter of

trees!' And with that she pulled up a corn-stalk, all tasseled out at the top, and hoisted it over her. Everybody pulled a corn-stalk, and I had 'em put Sister Mayhew up behind me on the colt, and we marched on, singing and praising God. Sister Belle was first, on John mule, and then me and Sister Mayhew on the colt, and then Brother Singleton and Brother Mayhew and all the children. That was the way we went down that hill and into Cub Run, singing and shouting at the top of our voices, and waving the corn-stalks. Sister Belle she started up:

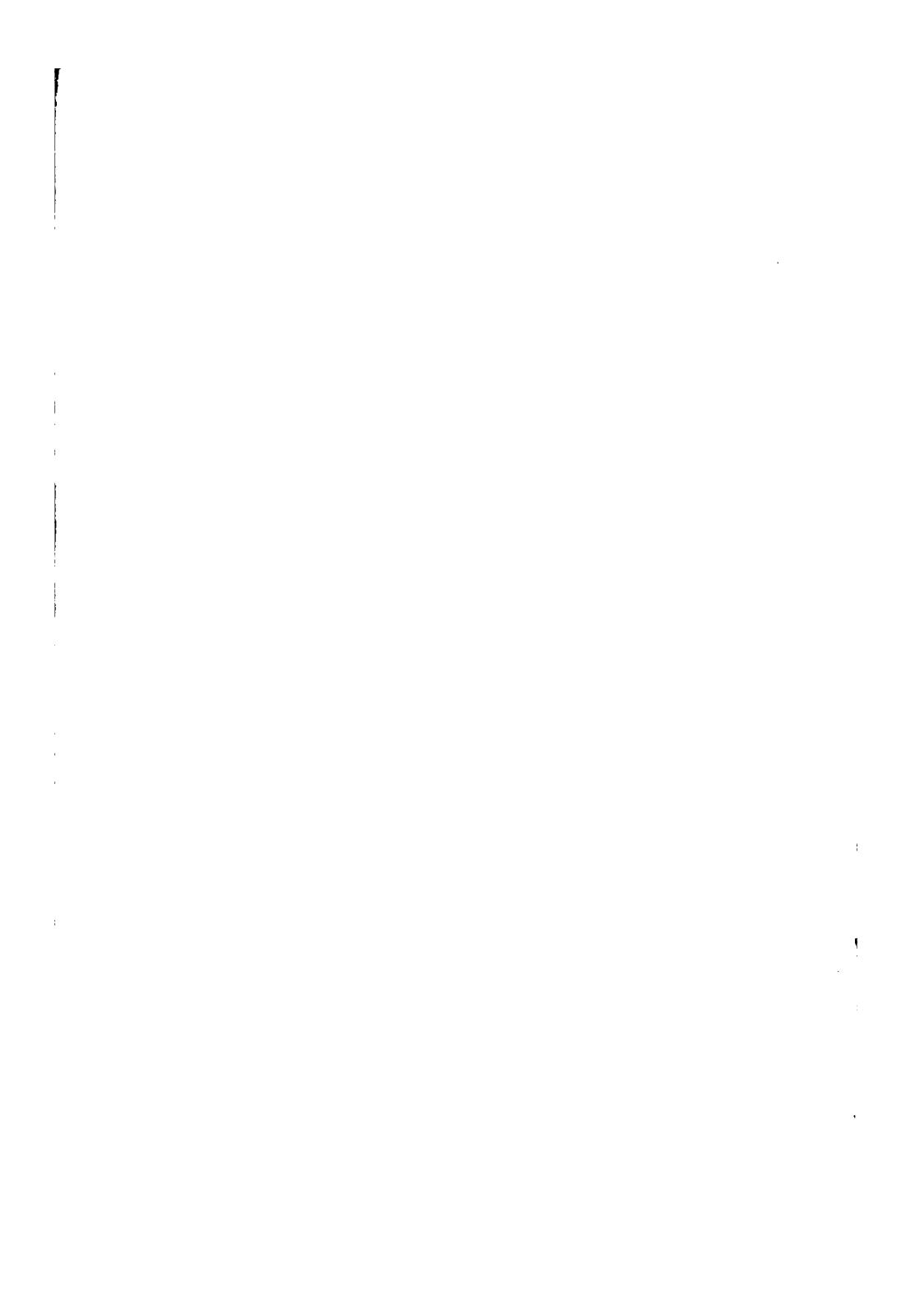
'We 're marching on to glory in the army of the
Lord,
Sing happy, happy, happy on the way !
On the strong neck of Satan bringing down the
flaming sword.
Oh, hap-hap- happy on the way !'

"We seen the houses commence to light up, and the folks poke their heads out. And by the time we struck the town, they was out and dressed and joining in the procession. All the way down the street they fell in line. It was pretty near as light as daylight. Sis-

ter Belle made for the tent, that was on the far side of town. Time we got there, every man, woman, and child in that town that could get about was following us up, and some of the women had snatched up their young babies and come. And them that was n't groaning and praying was shouting. If you believe me, every soul in that town had been under deep conviction, just like Sister Belle said, but all of them ashamed to be the first to say so. But when they seen the biggest folks in the place, Brother and Sister Mayhew, done give in and set the ball a-rolling, they just more than ready to follow them up. I found out afterward that not a single man, woman, or child in that town had got a wink of sleep that night. They was all just ready to blaze up, and it was bound to come. And of all the hallelujah times that ever was! We done spread that wagon-load of straw down for the mourners, and there was a whole tent full of 'em! But the mourning never lasted long, I tell you! It mighty soon turned to real full-salvation, saved-to-the-uttermost joy! I reckon there never was anything like it. Over two hundred people washed from sin and regenerated wholly in one night. Sister Belle she said in

all her ten years' preaching she never seen such a New Jerusalem morning, and Satan throwed down into such a deep pit. It was just sunrise when we broke up; and them Cub Run people went home every single one of 'em with the night of sin forever drove away, and the Sun of Righteousness shining in their hearts."

THE BAND AT SMITHSBORO



THE BAND AT SMITHSBORO

MRS. MELISSA ALLGOOD came out of the house after supper and settled herself comfortably on the steps of the front porch. "I was telling you yesterday," she began, "about Brother Cox down at Bowling Green buying two second-hand tents cheap and starting out two Holiness Bands to save souls and preach sanctification; and about me and Sister Belle Keen and Brother Singleton being one Band. It was early in June when we started out, and the first place we went to was Cub Run, down in the neighborhood of Mammoth Cave, and I told you how we had such a terrible battle with Satan there, but such a big outpouring and victory at last, and converted the whole town in one night. Well, look like that give us new zeal to carry on the war, and after that we just went about from place to place among the little towns there in middle Kentucky all

the rest of the summer, mowing down the sinners, and making ready for the harvest of righteousness.

"Sister Belle Keen she 's a full-salvation woman, I tell you, and got the power through and through; and she fairly made the feathers fly in the camp of the enemy. I never seen anybody have such a convicting eye, and the sinners just natchully could n't hold out before it. And her eye did n't leave her tongue much behind for power. I was n't nowheres by the side of Sister Belle when it come to preaching. Look like I could n't get up the heart to dangle them sinners over the mouth of hell by the hour like she did. I always was a poor-spirited woman anyhow, and ma she always told me so, and when I got religion and felt the call to preach, ma she scoffed at me, and said she 'd like to know how as chicken-hearted a woman as me, that never could get up the courage to preach nothing but love and grace, ever expect to do any converting. And of course I never expected to do very much, and I always let Sister Belle take the lead. And I tell you, she never had no compunctions. She fairly hated the devil and all his works, and she 'd come down on

'em with both feet every time, and never show no mercy to the sinners. Her notions was as straight and high-headed as she was, and as clear as them gray eyes of hers. It was different with me. Look like my biggest stumbling-block was feeling too sorry for folks, and not being hard enough on 'em. Somehow a woman that 's been married once don't expect so much of human nature as a' unmarried one, and mighty apt to have learnt a heap more charity and patience than is good for a preacher to have.

"So, as I said, I always set back and let Sister Belle take the lead. Brother Singleton being a man, anybody might have looked for him to do the biggest part; but he was a pale, puny young man, like I told you, and never had the gift of speech, and had to take a back seat on the preaching, though he come in fine on the singing, having a nice tenor voice; and it was always mighty convenient to have him to set up the tent, and nail up the planks for the seats, and spread the straw down for the mourners, and do such as that, that never was intended for women folks to do.

"It was a mighty hot summer, and them that thinks preaching is light work ought to

get out and try it once, especially with a tent. I never want to get to no hotter place than that tent was. And we 'd have to hold on pretty near half the night every night to bring out any motion from the sinners, they all so stiff-necked. Brother Singleton he give down under it worse than Sister Belle and me, and kept getting thinner and thinner every day, and the little cough he had to start in with deeper and more frequent. But he was so gay and cheerful all the time, and kept up such a light heart, that me and Sister Belle never realized how bad off he was—we being so took up with saving souls, anyway—until along the middle of August one morning he was n't able to lift himself out of bed.

"We was just winding up a big meeting then at a little town by the name of Smithsboro, and Brother Singleton was being entertained over at Brother Macklin's, across the street from where we was. When Brother Macklin come over and told us about Brother Singleton, Sister Belle she just looked like she been struck all in a heap. After Brother Macklin went away, 'Sist' Allgood,' she says, 'I been as blind as a bat, and never can forgive myself,' she says, 'letting him stay

with us and work in the vineyard till he fairly dropped in his tracks!' she says. 'And his pa having died with the galloping consumption, too!' she says. 'We just got to bundle him up and send him right home to his ma.' I told her I thought so too, and that we ought to send him home, if we can ever get enough money together to send him on. For by that time we was pretty near up to Louisville, and he lived way down in Tennessee, and it would take three dollars and a half, half-fare, to take him home, not counting the two dollars for a sleeper, because Sister Belle said of course he was n't able to stand the trip unless he had a sleeper. I told Sister Belle I did n't see how we could ever expect to get as much cash as that together at one time, but of course we could pray for it. It was a funny thing, but the folks where we would hold them meetings never seemed to have no idea on earth that preachers could have any use for money. Time they boarded us around during a meeting, and dined us a few times, seem like they felt they done their whole duty, and when we 'd take up a collection at the last, they 'd give about a nickel apiece, or some few a dime, and we 'd generally get just barely enough to pay our

way to the next town we was going—being preachers and traveling on half-fare—and pay the freight on the tent. And, of course, we was satisfied with what we got, being out to hunt souls and not money, and never made no objections. But Sister Belle she said she hoped them Smithsboro folks would do better than any of the rest; that there seemed to be so many professors and earnest seekers among 'em, and she had hopes of getting enough money to send Brother Singleton right home on.

"So that night we closed up the meeting, and taken up a collection, like we always did the last night, and if you believe me, we got just exactly two dollars and fifty-six cents! I was completely outdone, and felt like I was bound to have a good cry over it. But you ought to have seen Sister Belle. She just got righteous mad to the boiling-point, and got up and fairly lit into them people straight from the shoulder. She counted out that money right in the pulpit before 'em all, and told 'em them two dollars and fifty-six cents was all the wages them three hundred able-bodied people in that tent, that called themselves Christians so biggotty, had give three

preachers for preaching to 'em two weeks, and saving near all their stubborn and deep-dyed souls. She said the laborer was worthy of his hire, and she like to know what sort of honesty they think they got, and how come they think they got any religion anyhow, when they willing to take so much and give so little. She say she appreciated a widow's mite as much as anybody, but that she knew mighty well every man, woman and child in that congregation was n't a widow. She told 'em it never made no difference to her and me; that we never minded such little things as not having no decent clothes to wear, and was glad to be out at elbows for the glory of God; but she say here was poor Brother Singleton, sick and wore out in the work, and not able to lift up his head, and ought to go right home to his ma and be took care of, and not a single cent for him to go on. She say Brother Singleton could n't no more get home on faith than they could get to heaven on it; that them that counted on dead-heading either on a' earthly railroad or on the gospel train was going to find themselves badly left. She told 'em they all got to pay their fare, and the sooner they make up their minds

to it, the better for their salvation. She told 'em she was going to give 'em one more chance, and she going to pass that box around herself and see just who them people was that was trying to beat their way to heaven on faith without works. So she got down and passed the box around, and eyed them people through and through while she done it; and when she got back to the pulpit again and counted out the money, there was over sixteen dollars. Sister Belle and me never expected no such big amount as that, but we just give thanks in our hearts, and never let on.

"But after meeting broke, and Sister Belle and me had got home to the place we was staying at, Sister Belle she just turned in and cried for joy, to think that Brother Singleton was actually going to get home and have a chance to rest and get well again. I never seen Sister Belle cry over anything before. It was a funny thing. Just as long as Brother Singleton kept up and about, Sister Belle she never paid no more attention to him than if he was a fly, and not as much, and could n't hardly take time to be polite to him, not even as much as she ought to have been to a brother Christian, let alone a preacher. She paid a

heap more respects to any sort of a low-down sinner than she did to him, and when he 'd start to talk to her she 'd chop him off scandalous, and treat him fairly like he was n't nobody, although everybody else could see plain that he fairly worshipped the ground she walked on, and looked at her like she was a plumb saint. Brother Singleton had been converted under Sister Belle's preaching the year before, down in Tennessee, and her taking such a big interest in his salvation, as long as he was a sinner, I reckon give him false hopes. But of course just as soon as he come through safe and got fully regenerated, she just dropped him like a hot cake, and was completely took up with the other sinners; but seem like it was too late then for him to take his heart off of her. There was more than me that believed Brother Singleton never would have felt no particular call to preach if it had n't been for his not wanting to lose sight of Sister Belle,—though it don't seem right to say that, for if there ever was a man with more heart-felt religion than Brother Singleton I never seen any, though he did n't have the gift of speech. Sister Belle she was two or three years older than Brother Single-

ton — she was twenty-nine if she was a day, and never denied it — and she never seemed to have no realizing sense about Brother Singleton, or to give him any thought one way or the other. Sister Belle she natchully never thought about such things as anybody falling in love, anyway, having been too busy chasing the hosts of Satan ever since she grew up for any such as that. But I could n't have treated a yellow dog like she treated Brother Singleton, and especially a yellow dog as faithful and fond and sweet-spirited as him ; and I used to lay awake nights, sometimes, thinking how hard-hearted Sister Belle was. But when he taken down, I could see the still waters of her soul was stirring up, and I was thankful for it, and glad to see her cry, for it never did seem natchul to me to see a woman without any feelings.

“ Just as soon as we eat breakfast next morning, Sister Belle and me went over to see Brother Singleton and tell him the good news about the collection, and how he could go home and rest. We found him in the spare-room over at Brother Macklin's, and old Sister Macklin, the grandma of 'em all, setting by the bed fanning him with a big

turkey-wing. He looked just awful, so weak and white, and nothing but bones; but his eyes was lit up with perfect happiness the minute he seen Sister Belle come inside the door, and he never took 'em off of her. We asked him how he felt this morning, and he said he was just doing fine, and getting better all the time; that he would n't be laying up there in bed only to please Sister Macklin, that she like so well to have a' invalid to tend to and make trouble over. But he said he 'd be all right by to-morrow, and as well as anybody. Then he had to stop and have a terrible spell of coughing, that look like it would certainly rack him to pieces; but when it was over he laid back and smiled and said, yes, indeed, we could look to see him up and joining in the work to-morrow. Sister Belle she was pretty near as white as he was, and her face set hard. She told him he was n't going to do no such a thing; that we done taken up a big collection the night before, and we going to bundle him right off home on the noon train, on a sleeper, to his ma, to rest up and get his health back again; that he done wore himself out in the good work, and now the Lord going to give him some sweet rest.

“ But while she talked two red spots commenced to rise up in his cheeks, and his eyes begun to look wild. But he said right quiet, ‘ I ‘m much obliged to you, Sister Keen, for thinking about me so kind; but I ‘d rather not go home, and there ain’t no earthly need for me to. I ‘d rather stay up here in the work. I ‘m getting better every day, and I ‘ll be all right by — ’ ‘ Brother Singleton,’ Sister Belle says, ‘ don’t act the fool! You know you ain’t able to keep on in the work. Anybody can see that. You know you can’t stand up any longer under it. You know you ‘ve come to a stopping-place where you bound to set down a while. And I tell you you just *got* to go home and rest, whether you ‘re a mind to or not! ’ she says, ‘ and I won’t have no more foolishness about it! ’ He looked at her right stubborn. ‘ I won’t go a step! ’ he says. I seen he was trying to keep his lips tight and determined, but they bound to tremble some, look like. ‘ Harry Singleton! ’ Sister Belle says, fierce and wild-like, ‘ do you think I ‘m going to let you stay up here and *die*? ’ He put out his hands toward her. ‘ Let me stay, Sister Keen,’ he says, ‘ You must let me stay! If I got to

die, it 'll be where you 're at, and that 's all I ask ! What little time I got I want to live it somewherees near you ! I can 't bear to leave you ! ' He raised up a little and caught hold of a fold of her dress. ' I can 't stand it ! ' he says. He fell back again, and covered up his face with his hands.

" Sister Belle she stood there a minute, as pale and stiff as if she was stone, gazing at him. Then I seen the blood rush up in her face, and her eyes get soft, and fierce, and glad, and wet, all at once, and with that she dropped down on her knees, and slipped both arms around him, and pulled him over to her, and gathered him tight and close, with his poor, white face on her breast. ' You dear, foolish boy ! ' she says, ' if you love me like that I 'll *never* let you go away from me ! Never in this world, ' she says, ' nor any other ! ' And he just laid there with his head on her breast, looking up into her face, the tears rolling out of his eyes, too weak and happy and overcome to do anything but cry. And Sister Belle she comforted him and kissed him and quieted him, just like a baby. And after while she looked up at me and old Sister Macklin. ' Sist ' Allgood, ' she says, ' I wish

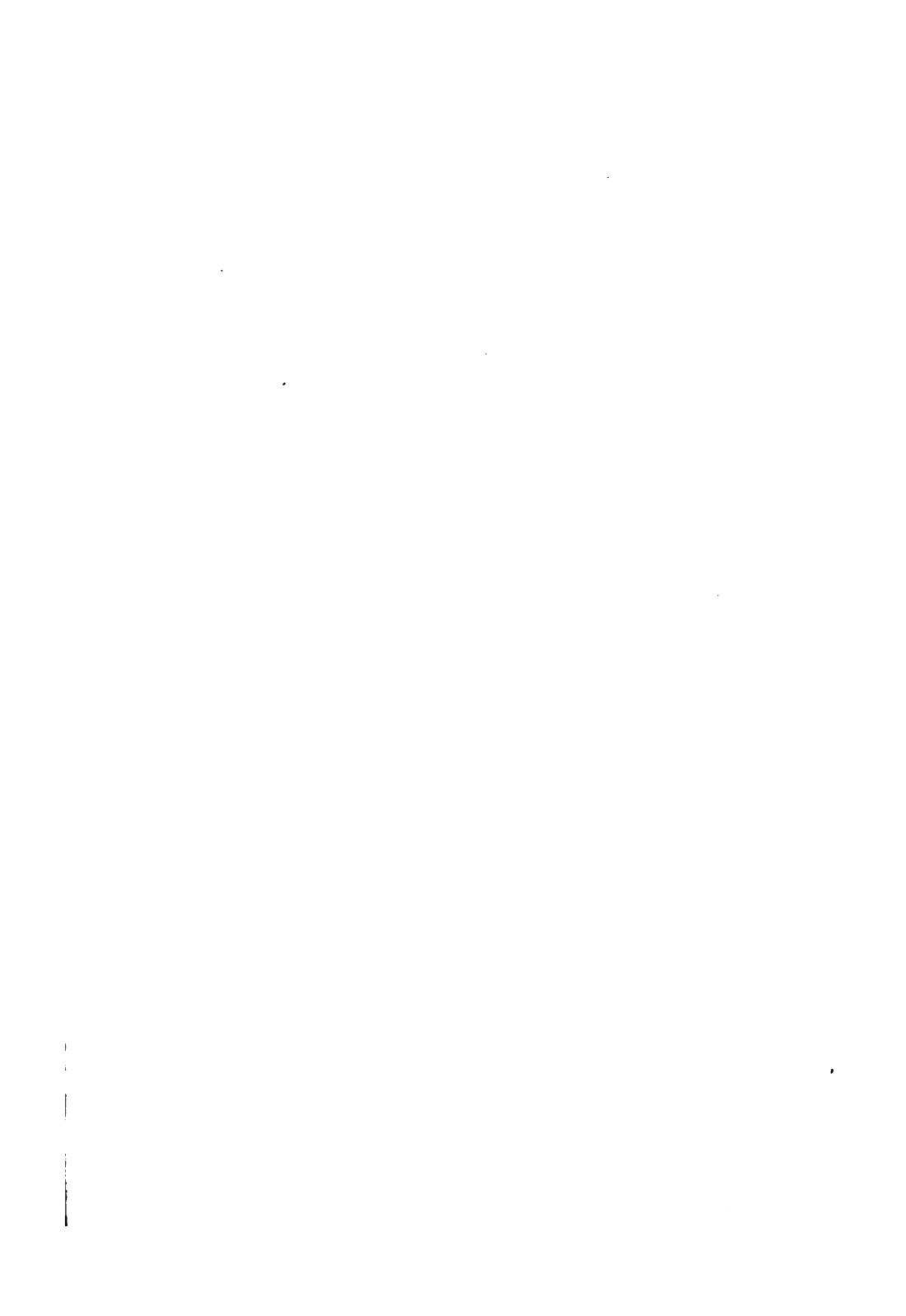
you 'd run out and hunt up Bobby Macklin, and tell him to ride over to Cross Roads just as quick as possible and bring old Squire Pinckney back with him. Tell him to be sure to get back here before the noon train goes South. Harry Singleton's got to go home,' she says, 'and on that train. But he ain't going by himself!'

"So I went out and hunted Bobby up and started him off, and then come back to the house and told the family how things was between Brother Singleton and Sister Belle. And them Macklin girls turned in and fairly outdid themselves getting up a wedding-breakfast. And in half an hour it was no-rated all over town about the wedding, and time the old Squire come riding up, about eleven o'clock, the whole town was in Brother Macklin's house and yard, and done made up a wedding-present of twenty-five dollars amongst 'em for the bride and groom.

"And they dressed Brother Singleton and set him up in a big arm-chair to be married. And it was plain to see that he was n't long for this world ; but even while I could n't help crying about that, there was joy in my heart all the time over knowing that death could n't

separate 'em for long, and that it was just like Sister Belle said, she 'd never let him go away from her, either in this world or any other, but keep him in her heart, even after he went out of her sight, till she could follow after him to the land where there ain't no more parting, or death, or tears.

"And, as I said, my heart was glad all the time underneath my crying, and when we all went down to the train with 'em, and the men folks had carried Brother Singleton into the sleeper, and laid him down nice and gentle, and left him a-holding tight to Sister Belle's hand when the train moved off, I says to old Sister Macklin, that was leaning on my arm and crying too, 'Sister Macklin,' I says, 'them two is starting off, not on any poor earthly wedding-trip,' I says, 'but on a' everlasting journey of love together; and not to any perishing human home,' I says, 'but to "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"!'"



A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE



RS. MELISSA ALLGOOD settled herself in her rocking-chair for a good talk. "I was telling you," she began, "about Sister Belle Keen and Brother Singleton and me being a Holiness Band last summer, and preaching all around in middle Kentucky, and about Brother Singleton taking down so sick at Smithsboro, and Sister Belle getting her eyes opened, and marrying him, and taking him home. Well, that broke up the band; for of course a lone widow woman, going on thirty-four years old, can't go preaching over the country with nothing but a tent to keep her company, no matter how much heartfelt religion and sanctification she's got. Anyhow, I felt like I'd done about enough work for one summer, and like now was my time to rest awhile. Sister Belle she had made me keep fifteen dollars of the collection we took up the last night, and I knew I

better be getting along home while I had the money to go on. So I stayed around a few days with the folks there at Smithsboro, and then started home. Smithsboro is pretty near up to Louisville, and I had to take a round-about way to get home, going down by Bowling Green and Guthrie, and then up again to the Station.

"Most of Smithsboro was down at the noon train to see me off, and I hated bad to leave them all. Lots of the women folks had give me presents to carry home with me. My valise was so full I had to set on it to fasten it, and I had a big bandbox full of lunch—because them Smithsboro people said they could n't bear to think of me traveling hungry—and a large-sized basket, with a lot of young fruit-trees and rose and geranium plants, and others, that different ones had give me; and here, at the last minute, old Sister Macklin she brought me down to the train six cans of Indian peaches she had put up herself—these half-gallon glass cans. I did n't see how on earth I was going to get home with 'em all, especially the cans of peaches, and change cars at Guthrie;—but I never was in a tight place yet that the Lord

did n't help me out, and I had faith that some-body would be provided to pack them cans around when it come time to change cars, and rested easy on the promise. I set the cans down on the floor of the car underneath the seat, and piled the other things up on the seat in front of me to keep them from jostling the cans, and then I set back in perfect peace, and spread my Bible open in my lap, ready to read when I got tired looking at the folks in the car.

"There was n't much to look at,—being all men folks,—and it was a mighty hot day, and I had eat a big dinner, and look like I could n't keep from nodding to save my life. I reckon I must have fell asleep, for first thing I knew I was woke up by my head getting a hard bump against the side of the car. It made me so blind I could n't see for a minute, but when I could the first thing I laid eyes on was an old gentleman leaning over the back of my seat fanning me with a big palm-leaf fan, and trying to tuck a pillow behind my head. 'Madam,' he says, 'allow me to make you more comfortable. I hope you ain't suffer-ing from that bump you got.' I set up straight, and took a good look at him. He

was a real nice, pious-looking old gentleman, about sixty-five years old, with gray hair and whiskers, and mighty bland ways. I never seen anybody I liked the looks of any better. 'I hope you 'll accept of this pillow,' he says, 'to rest your head on. I find it a mighty useful thing to travel with.' The pillow did n't look extra clean, but I would n't have hurt the old man's feelings for anything; so I leaned back against it, and thanked him as polite as I could, and told him how much beholden I was to him for his kindness, and which nobody knew better how to appreciate than a lone widow woman like me. He leaned over the back of my seat, and fanned me the politest that ever was, and said, no, indeed; the obligations was all on his side; that when he met up with a young female like me, traveling over the wide, wide world without any natchul protector, or no strong arm to lean on, it raised his sympathies up to that point he considered it a blessed privilege to be any assistance to such a one, and especially, he said, when it happened to be a godly female like he could see I was, by my traveling with a Bible, and reading it so industrious. He said it was a sight that brought joy to his

soul, in this generation of vipers, to see a righteous woman. Then, of course, I had to tell him all about my conversion, and getting sanctification, and feeling called to preach and save sinners, and about the meetings we 'd been carrying on all the summer. Then he told me about his living down in Tennessee, and being an elder in the Church, and said he 'd just been up to Louisville on a little trip, but had found it a terrible ungodly place, and was glad to get out of it. The minute he said he lived down in Tennessee, I says to myself that instant, 'Here 's my special providence the Lord has provided to help me change cars, and pack them cans at Guthrie,' and I just give thanks in my soul, and rejoiced.

"We talked on, and had a mighty entertaining conversation on religion. He said he could n't agree with me on sanctification ; but I read Bible to him on that line, and expounded till he said he did n't know but what I was right — that if there ever was anybody truly sanctified and free from sin he believed it must be me. And I felt plumb happy over his being convinced, and over me being the one to lead him out of Babylon. Then he asked me a heap of questions, and seemed to take a real

fatherly interest in me. Then he commenced telling about himself, and said he was a widower, and had lost three as dear companions as ever shed their rays on mortal man, and how the last one had been in glory just a year to the day, and how lonesome he was, his children being all married off. I felt awful sorry for him. It always did seem to me like a man was a mighty incomplete thing without a wife to steady him, and always reminded me of a young colt. You know there ain't a more foolish animal on earth than a colt. He 'll head off across a field, and after while he 'll bring up short, and wonder what he 's there for ; then he 'll kick up, and strike away in another direction — don't seem to have any object in life. It 's the same way with a lone man, and any woman with feelings is bound to feel sorry for 'em. I could n't have felt more sorry for my own father than I did for that old man. I told him all my sympathies was with him. He said if ever there was a man needed sympathy he knew it was him ; that look like he had more trouble than he could bear. I asked him what his particular trouble was, and he give a big groan, and said he was going to confide in me.

" He said he 'd been looking around for the last two or three months, it being natchul for a man that had had three such dear companions to feel the need of another when they was taken ; that he 'd heard a heap about these matrimonial associations around over the country, that brings people together by advertising ; and he said he felt led to put a card in one of them matrimonial newspapers, giving a description of himself and his intentions. He said the very next week he got an answer to it from a lady up at Louisville, 'a widow, refined, thirty-two, and a brunette, without incumbrances, and willing to correspond with a view to matrimony.' Said that description suited him exactly. That he 'd always wanted to marry a Kentuckian, somehow, but look like the other three times he never quite made it, his other three dear companions having come from Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. But he said this time he made up his mind from the start that he 'd try for a Kentucky woman—that there was something mighty beguiling about them. Then he said her being a brunette suited him, too—that all his three other companions had been blue-eyed, and he felt like he 'd enjoy a little change and

variety. Then he said her being without incumbrances was another good thing; that at his time of life he did n't feel warranted in taking a ready-made family to raise up. So he said he answered right back, and the letters commenced to fly pretty lively, and in two weeks' time all the arrangements was made, and the day set. He said, out of compliment to his last dear departed companion, he set the anniversary of her death for the wedding-day. He said he turned in then, and told all his connection and friends about his going to be married; and they made big arrangements about giving him a house-warming when he got back, and welcoming the bride, and seen him off on the train, and told him he could count on all of them being there, and more too, when he got back, to meet the bride. So he said he started off, rejoicing in his heart.

"He said he got to Louisville about five o'clock in the evening, and spruced himself up a little at the station,—clean collar and such,—and set out to hunt the widow. That he found the number all right,—a real nice-looking frame house,—and rung the bell; and who should come to the door but the widow herself? He said the sight of her just natchully

paralyzed him ; that he had made allowances for a woman's natchul good opinion of herself, and had n't set his expectations up too high. But he said she just laid it over all the women he ever had seen before ; that none of them could n't compare with her. That her eyes was the blackest, and her teeth the whitest, and her cheeks the rosiest he ever did see, and she was as round and plump as a partridge, and never looked a day over twenty-nine. That he fairly held his breath to think of him marrying such a wife as that — that none of his three dear companions could n't hold a candle to her in looks. That she treated him the politest and most affectionate that ever was, and hung up his hat for him, and took him in the parlor, and set and talked until supper about their wedding and plans and such, and then made him go out and eat supper with her and her kin that she was staying with. Said he never was treated as nice in his life ; that she just honeyed him up and paid him more compliments than ever was, and looked at him like she thought he was just too sweet for anything. Said after supper she told him she had a heap of things to do — packing and such — to get ready for to-morrow, and

she expect she 'd have to send him down to his hotel right away to get a chance. He told her he was agreeable ; that it was like pulling teeth to leave her that early in the evening, but he was n't the man to interfere with any woman's wedding plans, and go he would. She told him to see that he got there in plenty of time in the morning — that she was mighty afraid he 'd keep her waiting ; that she was going to have the preacher there at eight o'clock sharp, and did n't want the bridegroom to be behind time. That she just made eyes at him till he was plumb crazy, and then she kissed him good-by and sent him off.

“ He said just as he got about half-way down the square from her house he met up with a big, tall man, with a red mustache and a broad-brimmed hat, and his pants tucked in his boots, and a leather belt on. Said the man was stopping before every house to look at the numbers, and that he knew the minute he laid eyes on the man that he was from Texas, from the way he walked all over the sidewalk. That he turned around, and looked at the man several times after he passed by him, and after while the man stopped in front of the widow's house, and looked at the num-

ber, and took a piece of paper out of his pocket and looked at that, and then opened the gate and went in. He said he knew in a minute it was some of the widow's Texas kin come up to her wedding, and was mighty tickled over it.

"So he said he went to the hotel then, and stayed all night, and got up betimes in the morning so as he would n't be late for the wedding; that by five o'clock he was up and dressed in his wedding clothes, and then he had to set around and wait till half-past six before they 'd give him any breakfast, them city people being such late risers. That at seven he got a hack, and started out to the bride's. That when he got there, lo and behold, there was another carriage standing there at the gate, and not no common hack neither, but what he called a landau, with the top all throwed back, and a driver with a stovepipe hat. Said he supposed it belonged to the bride's rich kin, and never worried no more about it, but got out of his hack and started up the walk. That just as he got to the bottom of the steps the front door opened, and out walked the widow, hanging on the arm of that red-headed Texas man,

and smiling back over her shoulder at the folks inside. Said when she turned her head and laid eyes on him, she just give one scream, and dodged behind the Texas man, and hung on to his shoulders hollering and weeping. That the Texas man he looked plumb dazed, but he just natchully got two pistols out of his pockets to have 'em handy. That the old gentleman then he spoke up and asked what it was all about, and why, when a' honorable man come to get his bride, folks wanted to meet him at the front door with pistols. Nobody could n't answer him, seemed like, till a man that looked like a preacher stepped out of the door, and asked him who it was that he expected to marry, and he told the preacher it was the lady there in the door, and the preacher said he just done married that lady to another gentleman, and there must be some mistake. Then the widow she bust out crying worse than ever, and said she knew she had promised to marry the old gentleman, but that was the evening previous, before she had seen the gentleman from Texas, and learned to love him with undying love. Said she been carrying on a correspondence with 'em both, and set the

same wedding-day for both of 'em, thinking whichever she liked best when they got there she would take. Said she thought she liked the old gentleman when she seen him, but after she laid eyes on the Texas man, her present husband, she knew that her heart was his forever, so she had the wedding at seven in the morning instead of eight, thinking they'd be off before the old gentleman come, so 's to save his feelings; and which they would have been off in five minutes more; and she hoped the old gentleman would forgive her, that she'd never do it again. 'And then,' the old gentleman says, 'her and the Texas man got in the landau and rode off, and the folks throwed old shoes and rice after 'em.'

"Look like the old man felt the worst about it that ever was. He just laid his head down on the back of my seat and groaned. 'To think,' he says, 'of me giving my heart into the hands of such a female as that—such a fickle, heartless, deceiving woman, and one with such poor taste! Solomon knew what was what when he said, "Beware of the strange woman." But he said what he was suffering from her treating him that scandal-

ous way was n't by no means the worst of it; that it was having the world know a man's sorrows that was the hardest to bear. Said he could have stood it if nobody had knowed it but him; but when he thought about his children and kin and friends all fixing for such a big housewarming that evening, and the whole town being at the train to meet him and his bride, looked like his heart would certainly break in two. He said man was certainly born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

"I tried to cheer him up all I could, and told him he certainly had a heap to bear, but I never doubted it would be sanctified to him in the end, if he would bear it patient; that the Lord always provided a balm for wounded feelings, and bound up the broken heart. The old gentleman he leaned his elbow on the window-sill, and his head on his hand, and looked out of the window, the dolefullest you ever seen, and every now and then he'd fetch a groan. I felt awful sorry for him. I never could understand how a woman could have the heart to treat a man so bad.

"By and by he raised his head up again, like a new notion struck him. 'The Lord will

provide,' he says, 'the Lord will provide,' kind of to himself, over and over. Then he took a good look at me. Then he leaned over the back of my seat again. 'Sister Allgood, madam,' he says, 'it ain't for me to say the Lord don't work in mysterious ways his wonders to perform, or that he deserts the righteous in their hour of need. No; as I have set here I have seen his wonderful works and intentions. As I set here I behold his hand—I see the special providence he has provided for me. In you, madam, I see that special providence—that balm which is to bind up my wounds. In you I see the wife sent to me from heaven, and just in the nick of time. I see now that it never was intended for me to marry a black-eyed woman. Blue eyes I know and have tried, and am going to stick to them. Yes; in them eyes of yours I behold truth and constancy and affection. And the train stops thirty minutes for supper at Guthrie, and I 'll get a preacher there to marry us, and when I get off the train at my home I 'll have a bride for them to welcome and housewarm, and won't have my head bowed to the dust in humiliation and broken heart. Yes; I see the power of the Lord in it!'

“ He laid his hand on my shoulder. I was just natchully struck dumb, and could n’t have said a word if I ’d had a chance. ‘ Don’t speak,’ he says ; ‘ a woman is always opposed to making up her mind in a hurry ; but it ’s all right. This is a special providence, and the will of God. I know all you would say — a woman can’t help being coy and bashful. But never mind ; it ’s all right.’ He patted me on the shoulder. ‘ But, brother,’ I says — ‘ Don’t mention it,’ he says. ‘ Do you reckon such frivolous things as clothes enters into my calculations ? ’ ‘ It ain’t clothes, brother, I says ; ‘ it ’s — ’ ‘ It is short notice,’ he says, ‘ but I could n’t love you better if I had knowed you a thousand years. You need n’t have no fears about my affection, or about me making a good husband. If my three dear departed companions could rise up here in this car and give their testimony, it would convince you.’ ‘ Yes, sir,’ I says ; ‘ I don’t doubt it would ; but — ’ ‘ Of course I ain’t as young as I used to be ; but my folks are a long-lived family, and don’t age soon. My father died at ninety, hale and hearty, and my grandfather at ninety-five, spry as a kitten. No, madam ; a man is as old as he feels ; and I assure you I don’t

feel a day over forty. We will have a long life to live together.'

"And so that old man went on, and I could n't get in a word edgewise, for every time I 'd start to say anything he 'd take the words out of my mouth. Look like he never seemed to have no earthly idea maybe I did n't *want* to marry him. I commenced to get plumb scared and trembly. I actually got afraid that old man would over-persuade me to marry him against my will. Seem like there was n't anything on earth I could do or say but just set there and listen to him talk. It was awful—I did n't know what in the world to do, and just set there in a cold perspiration.

"At last the train stopped at a station, and a mighty nice-looking old lady got on—the only lady besides me in the car. Then I felt better. I told the old gentleman I was very tired, and felt like I must have a little rest, and if he would go into the smoking-car and take a smoke for awhile, I would try to rest myself. He said certainly, but he wanted me to understand he could n't stay away from me long, and would make that pipe a short one. As soon as he was out of the car I run over and set down by the old lady, and told her as

quick as I could what a trouble I was in, and how I never knew how on earth to get rid of the old gentleman. She felt awful sorry for me, and told me not to cry; that we'd fix it up all right, and there was n't no real danger. She said she reckoned the old man's mind was a little turned by his trouble, but she'd see that I got away from him all right at Guthrie. That I would have to wait ten minutes at Guthrie for my train going north, and his train would wait there half an hour for supper before going south, and the thing for her and me to do would be to get him started off to hunt a preacher so's he would n't be on hand when my train left, and I would get off all right on my train for home. She said it would be as easy as falling off a log. She said for me to send him to her to make inquiries about a preacher, and she would fix him so he would n't get back under half an hour. She told me to treat him just the same as I had, when he come back from the smoking-car, and not to rile him or cross him any.

"So when he come back in the car I did like she said. He never seemed to expect me to say anything anyhow, so I just let him

go ahead and talk and plan and rejoice, though I felt like an awful hypocrite.

“Finally we got to Guthrie about six o’clock that evening, and the old gentleman helped me and my bandbox and valise and basket and cans off the nicest kind, and took me to the waiting-room. Then he said he must hurry out and get the preacher that was to make him the happiest man on earth, and for me not to stir till he come back. I told him he better inquire where to find a preacher, and I expect that lady setting over the other side of the room might know something about the preachers down this way. So he went over and asked her, and I felt like a whitened sepulcher. Then he started off a-running.

“Them ten minutes before my train come seemed to me more like ten years. I just set there and shook, I was so afraid the old gentleman would meet up with a preacher on the way, and get back before my train started, or that my train would be late. But finally my train whistled, and the old lady she picked up my valise and bandbox, and I jerked up the basket of fruit-trees and the six cans of peaches, and we made for the train. The

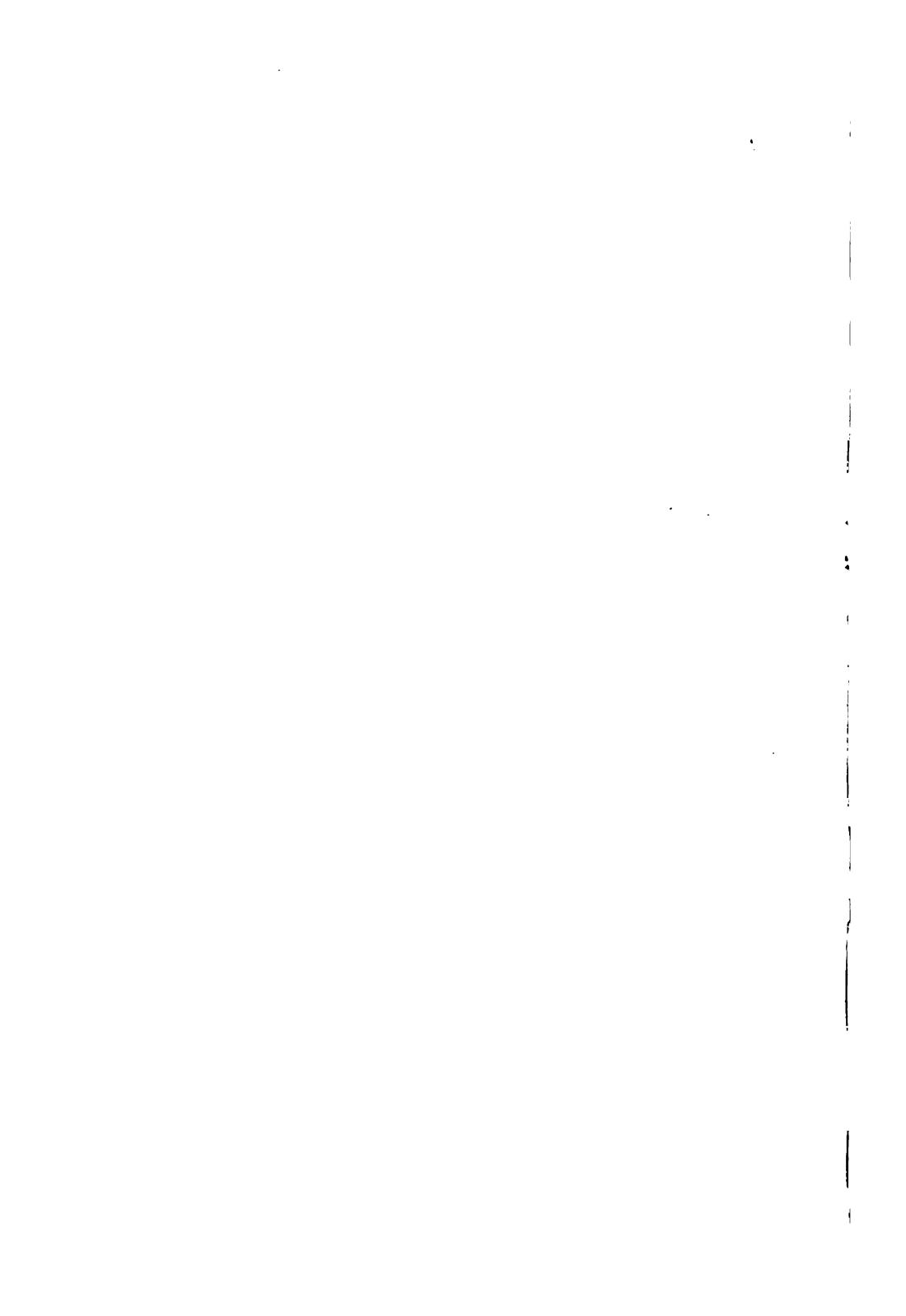
folks that was inside the car all had to get out before I could get in, and looked to me like I would certainly go raving, distracted crazy, they were so slow. But at last the very last one come down the steps, and I had just set foot on the lowest step, and the conductor was bracing me from behind— me not being able to catch hold of anything on account of my arms being so full— when I heard a yell that fairly knocked the life out of me, so 's I could n't move hand or foot, but was just petrified where I was at, and if the conductor had n't been boosting me like he was I reckon I 'd have fell off that step like a bag of meal. I cast one eye down the station platform, and there come the old gentleman, his coat-tails flying, and him yelling every step of the way, and the preacher he had got trying to keep up with him. 'Lord, help!' I says; 'Lord, help!' I knew if the Lord did n't help me I was gone. Then I turned them fruit-trees and them six cans of Indian peaches loose, and grabbed hold of the railing, and got the strength from heaven to climb up the steps of that car and on to the platform of it. The glass cans rolled down, and busted as they fell, and the peaches just went all over the

depot platform there, and the Lord used 'em to save me ; for when the old gentleman come a-tearing along, he never did a thing but slip up on them peaches and fall all over himself in the midst of them. 'Hallelujah !' I says. 'Glory !' And I heard the old lady holler out, 'Amen !' And just then the train it commenced to pull out, and the conductor jumped on with my valise and bandbox, and the last I seen of the old gentleman he was still a-squirming around in them Indian peaches in his wedding-clothes, trying to get on his feet, and still a-yelling. And I just rejoiced and give thanks and shouted, because I knew I had been mightily delivered. 'Yea, the Lord is my defense in time of trouble, and hath wonderfully delivered me out of the hands of the evil one.' And of course I felt awful sorry for the old gentleman ; but, like the Bible says, 'Am I my brother's keeper ?' And how could anybody expect me to be keeper to a crazy man, anyhow ?

"I 've had a many a' experience with widowers in my time, and got mighty little respect for 'em anyway, but that was the narrowest escape I ever had, or ever hope to have, and I am trusting in the Lord to deliver

me out of any more of their clutches, and am fighting mighty shy of any bland, harmless-looking man, young or old, with an expecting look in his eye, that I meet up with in any of my wanderings, because I know in reason he 's a widower beginning to look up, and the farther away a lone woman keeps from any such, the better for her."

A SHIFTLESS MAN



A SHIFTLESS MAN

IT was Saturday afternoon at the Station. The day was cold and gray, and the snow whirled and dashed in the grasp of the north wind. The crowd around the big stove in Bundy's store thinned out somewhat as the whistle of the three o'clock train sounded, but the men hurried back again before the engine was fairly under way, stamping the snow off their boots, and rubbing their reddened noses and ears. They lounged in easy attitudes on the benches and boxes around the stove, most of them propping their feet up on the large foot-rest that ran all around it. Mr. Bundy opened the stove door with the long poker, and punched vigorously at the coals. He let the door remain open, and stood holding the poker out absent-mindedly.

“Velorous Barnes come back last night,” he announced. A murmur, not altogether

one of surprise, went around the circle. "Come on the midnight passenger. Tommy T. Nickins was setting up to ketch the mailbag, and say first thing he knowed the train it slowed up, and the conductor commenced hustling out Velorous, and Mis' Barnes, and nine children! Yes, sir, *nine* children, by gosh! It just takes a real shiftless man like Velorous Barnes, that can't even make a living for hisself, to do the replenishing of the earth!" Mr. Bundy stopped short in his indignation. "Five year ago, when Velorous Barnes went to Dakoty, 'Velorous,' I says, 'there's certain duties a man owes to society and to posterity,' I says. 'But when a man's a poor man, *and* a slow man,' I says, 'and ain't able to provide for a family proper, not even that he's already got,' I says, 'and which he's already done considable of replenishing the earth,' I says, 'then you might say his obligations is the other way. A man must live by *reason*,' I says, 'and when a man's already got more family than he can feed, then in reason he ought n't to get any more.' And here's Velorous done come back with five more!"

"Well, he's got Bible for it," remarked

Brother Gilly Jones from his perch on the counter. "He 's certainly got Bible." He laid a claw-like hand on Mr. Gideon Blevins's shoulder, and, leaning over, spat, with extraordinary precision of aim, into the saw-dust box in front of the stove.

"Bible!" exclaimed Mr. Bundy, "Bible!" his voice thrilling with scorn. "Yes, sir, it 's just about such blame foolishness as that that folks gets from the Bible!" There was a perceptible awakening of interest in the group. "When a man wants to do wrong, he can get him a shining example from the Bible every time, and plenty of texts!" Mr. Bundy theatrically brandished the poker. "There 's Abraham lying about his wife, and old sneak-ing Jacob stealing Esau's birthright and his pa-in-law's stock, and David murdering Uri-y, and Solomon marrying a thousand women, and — by gosh, I could name a hundred of 'em! I may be a' infidel, but I know the Bible! I know all about them old sinners the preachers gets up and norates how terrible righteous they was. They just like some that sets up for such saints *nowadays*, and claims sanctification, and keeps up such a shouting honest folks can't hear theirselves talk. Oh,

I know 'em! I may be a' infidel, but I ain't a hypocrite, and I ain't got no patience *with* 'em. No, sir, I like to see a man where he's at, there he *be*! There's a heap of things where me and the Bible don't agree."

Brother Rolly McKittrick hastened to avert the impending storm.

"Velorous been doing anything out in Dakota?" he inquired.

"Living off his brother, I reckon," said Brother Jones.

"Nobody can't say he ain't raised *one* good crop," remarked Mr. Gideon Blevins, with preternatural solemnity. A titter went around among the younger men.

Brother Rolly propped his long legs up on the foot-rest, dug his hands in his pockets, and gazed musingly at the red glow of the fire, which in turn sent back a warm reflection over his thick white hair and beard and kindly face. "It was always funny about them two boys," he said. "Both of 'em hard, stiddy workers, but William always making, and Velorous always losing. I never see a man more willing than Velorous Barnes, but look like things bound to go against him. It's a funny thing. Them two boys'd both raise a crop

of tobacco, and both work as hard as they could, and here along at the last something'd always happen to Velorous's, and William he 'd make more 'n anybody at his 'n. Look like Velorous 'd wait just a day too long about cutting, and here come a rain and burn his crop all up. Or he 'd cut a day too soon, before it was good ripe. Or maybe he 'd be setting up with somebody sick, and forget all about it. I never did allow that Velorous ought to get any blame for being shiftless. Seem like he always done his best. No, sir, I lay it all on the devil. Look like the Lord just lets the devil persecute some that way, and try their patience,—for a' example, like Job. Of course, Velorous ain't had as *bad* afflictions as Job yet."

"Velorous ain't never had nothing to lose," said Brother Jones.

"Except children," corrected Mr. Blevins.

Mr. Bundy laid the poker carefully on the floor, drew up a chair, and sat down deliberately, crossing his legs, and tilting back at a dangerous angle. "Job 's the only man in Bible I got any respects for," he said, impressively. "Not that him and me agree in all our opinions. No, sir, not by no means.

But Job he was n't no hypocrite, and never had no patience with 'em. Job was what I call a *man!*" He brought his fist down with emphasis on his knee, to the imminent danger of his position. "Yes, sir, when them lick-spittle friends of his 'n advises him to act the hypocrite, and acknowledge the Lord 's treating him right when He *ain't*, and tells him 'Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defense, and thou shalt have plenty of silver,' and Job comes down on 'em like a thousand of brick, 'No, sir,' says he, 'I will maintain mine own ways before Him. Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me,' that 's what I call a *man!* By gosh, I 'd like to shake hands with him! And there ain't nothing I 'd enjoy more than conversing with him. Yes, sir, I could set up all night and talk to Job! And what 's more, know I was talking to a' honest man. And that 's what you can't find *nowadays* nowheres, at least they mighty scarce,—specially amongst church-members. And when I talk about church-members, as I 've said before, and say again, I want everybody to understand that there 's *one* man I don't count in with the rest, and that I got as many respects for as I got for Job hisself, and he 's my old

friend Rolly McKittrick!" Mr. Bundy reached his hand across the firelight to Brother Rolly, who clasped it warmly. "And which I 've always said I believed you 'd get your idees changed and live by reason yet!"

"And I got the same hope for you, Joe, that before you die you 'll get religion. You too good a man not to have it."

"Oh, I ain't got such a grudge against *religion*," said Mr. Bundy. "It 's them that professes it that give me the big disgust for it. If a few more of 'em was good, honest men like you, Rolly, I don't know as I 'd ever been such a' all-fired infidel!"

Brother Jones took advantage of Mr. Bundy's unusual concession. "You 'll be mighty sorry you was such a' all-fired infidel on the Great Day!" he said warningly.

Mr. Bundy dropped the front legs of his chair to the floor. "I 'm seeing as great a day as ever I expect to see, Gilly Jones," he said severely. "You all can believe all the lies you want to, but I 'm living by reason, and nobody can't fool *me*. No sir, I ain't goin' to take nobody's word for *nothing*! I 'm looking out of Joe Bundy's eyes! And I 'm going to believe them things I *see*. See with

my natchul eye! There ain't nobody nowheres would like to live again better than me,—ain't any man enjoys life better. But I never see nobody come to life after they died,—and I 'm bound to say I don't see no likelihood of it. It ain't in reason. No, gentlemen, I 'm bound to believe that 's the end of it. When a man dies, he 's *dead*,—dead and gone. I 'm bound to be honest about it,—I 'm bound to say, 'When you die, you dead and gone, Joe Bundy, and that 's the end of you. You got to go down into the grave, whence thain't no returning. Got to say a' eternal farewell to the wife of your bosom, and the children that 's growed up around you, and the friends you now conversing with. Got to go,—dust to dust, ashes to ashes,—like the birds of the air and the beasts of the fields.'"

"That 's what you *believe*," said Brother Jones, "but even a' infidel can't *know* there ain't no hereafter. And I say it 's a heap better to be on the safe side. Yes, sir, there may be a hereafter and there may n't, but whatever there be, it makes me feel *good* to know I 'm on the safe side!" Brother Jones nursed one knee, and with closed eyes swayed gently back and forth on the counter.

Mr. Bundy glanced scornfully at Brother Jones, and continued his train of thought. "There's three things a man natchully asks hisself, and been asking since the year one. 'Where'd I come from?' 'Where am I at?' and 'Where am I going?' And I ain't blaming nobody for putting them questions to theirselves. But there ain't but one of them questions ever been answered, or ever going to be. We know where we're at, and that's all. I know I'm living here on this mortal spere for a few fleeting years. I know my name's Joe Bundy, and that I got this here store to keep, and a family to provide for, and pay my debts. And I'm bound to say that's about all I *do* know. I'm also bound to say it keeps me pretty much on the jump living up to that,—and which if *more* folks would spend their time living where they at, and not excursioning around in unbeknown regions, the world it'd run considable smoother and easier, in *my* opinion."

"A man's got to prepare for eternity," argued Brother Jones. "Got to make his salvation sure. I tell you, I want to keep out of hell!"

"I say thain't no such a thing as hell!" said

Mr. Bundy excitedly. "You all just believe them things because you was raised to 'em,— all them lies about hell and the Devil. If you 'd reason about 'em a little, you 'd *know* they was all lies. I tell you a man 's got to use his senses. What 's a man got eyes for? Why, gentlemen, to *see* with. Now I 've heard a heap of talk about hell and the Devil, but I never *seen* none, and I never met up with a' honest man that ever seen any. I bet you never seen none, Rolly?"

"Well, no," Brother Rolly admitted. "But that never shook my faith any."

"Of course you never seen no such,— nor nobody else!" exclaimed Mr. Bundy, triumphantly.

"Ain't so certain about that," said Brother Jones, slowly stroking his scanty beard. "You can talk for yourself, but I don't know as you can speak for other folks."

"I say nobody,— no honest, reasoning, human person, ever seen no such with their nat-chul eye!"

Brother Jones emptied his mouth of the entire quid this time, and leaned heavily over Mr. Blevins's shoulder. "I have," he said with lowered voice, glancing fearfully at

the semi-darkness beyond the warmth of the firelight. "I 've saw him." The men instinctively drew closer together. Mr. Tommy T. Nickins, the clerk, who had been engaged in the surreptitious abstraction of raisins from a shelf behind the counter, picked up a camp-stool and hurriedly joined the circle, his large ears standing out stiffly from his head.

"And I ain't the only one that 's saw him," continued Brother Jones. "Gid Blevins here he saw him onc't, and used to tell about it mighty biggotty before he backslid!" Mr. Blevins gazed at the floor with non-committal eyes.

Having thus fortified his position, Brother Jones proceeded: "It was down the big road here, in front of Brother Rolly's big gate,— just before I got religion. Brother Hockersmith been carrying on a big meeting for three weeks out at the Chapel, and I was terrible convicted, but bound I was n't going to get down and humble myself. Look like I could n't stay away from that meeting. All day long I 'd laugh at the idee, but evening 'd see me saddle my horse, and put out for the Chapel. One night Brother Hockersmith preached a powerful sermon, and I was deep

convicted,— but too proud to get down and say so. They held on late that night,— had a hallelujah time. The last word Brother Hockersmith said was that any deep-dyed sinner that could hold out against that meeting and that outpouring of spirit was on the high road to hottest hell, and nothing could n't snatch him back, and he wash his hands of him. I tell you I felt awful. And after meeting was over I found my horse done broke his hitch-rein and wandered off. I had to spend pretty near half a' hour, I reckon, in the woods hunting him, and by that time everybody done gone home. I put out down the road fast as I could go. Never went but a little piece before I think I hear somebody coming behind me. I could hear the horse hit the ground,— soft-like, and getting louder. I looked around. It was the brightest kind of moonlight, and nary thing on that road no-where! I had n't more 'n turned my head before I heard it louder than ever, and following me up close. I looked around again,— could n't see a thing! My soul was in misery anyhow, and I wished I was at the end of them five mile. I heard that other horse coming smack up with me, and first thing I

knowed my horse done whirl around in the road and stop stone still. And then I seen it *was* somebody, and I knowed in a minute *who* it was. 'My friend, wait!' he says. 'Don't be in such a hurry! You and me got a long journey to go together!' he says. And with that he give a little laugh. I set up on my horse like dead, and he set on his 'n and looked at me. I could see the bars of Brother Rolly's big gate through him and his horse, but his eyes they was burning into me like fire. I 'll never forget the sight of them wicked, varmint-looking eyes! I could feel my horse trimbling under me. 'A *long* journey,' he says,—them was his words—and he retch out his hand and taken hold of my bridle. I thought I was gone! I tell you, gentlemen, there comes times when the pride of man ain't nowheres, and when it 's a mighty convenient thing to have the Lord to call on! I felt all the stiff-neckness a-oozing out of me. I was humbled then and there. 'Lord, help!' I says, 'Lord, help!' Sound like somebody else a-talking, it was so faint and far-off. But you know the Bible says the gates of hell shall not prevail, and I had n't no more than said them words, gentlemen,—you know the

Devil can't stand a word of Scripture — till he turn tail and fairly flew back the way he come, and the next minute my horse was loping up that big road faster 'n ever he went before. And I tell you I did n't take no more chances. I got religion that night, and give my heart to heaven, and laid a good grip on full salvation ! ”

A hush fell upon the group. Mr. Bundy opened his mouth to speak. At the same instant everybody was startled by the violent opening of the front door, and the attendant inrush of wind and snow. A figure stood hesitatingly on the threshold. “ Hi there ! come in and shut the door ! ” shouted Mr. Bundy. The man shut the door nervously, and came slowly forward into the circle of firelight. He was a tall man, a good deal bent at shoulders and knees, and with the general effect of having long since outgrown his clothes. His coat hung loosely from his shoulders, and fell scarcely below the waist-line in the back. On one arm he carried a small child.

“ Well, if it ain't Velorous Barnes ! ” exclaimed Mr. Bundy. “ Howdy, Velorous ! ” There was a chorus of howdyes as Velorous passed slowly into the circle, and his large hand and long wrist fell limply after each hand-

shake. Brother Rolly moved down and made room on the bench by his side. "Set down, Velorous," he said heartily. "Glad to see you home again."

Velorous took the seat, and the child slipped down into his lap, and sat gazing around with wide, grave eyes. The somewhat protracted silence was broken by Brother Jones.

"How 's Dakoty?" he inquired.

"Oh, tolable, I reckon," Velorous drawled, with constitutional deliberation.

"They say them western states is a long ways ahead of us."

"Yes, sir, some says so," assented Velorous.

"How 's business out there in Dakoty?"

"William he says business is mighty fine out there. He says thain't a better country nowheres for business. William he 's done mighty well out there."

"I reckon Kentucky seems mighty slow to you after that?"

"Well, no," said Velorous. "I never said *I* liked it out there."

"Well, did n't you?" Brother Jones asked, with some impatience.

"Only tolable," said Velorous, slowly. "I never had very good luck out there, and never

stayed there but a year. A big hail-storm come along and killed all my wheat, and I kind of felt like Dakoty was n't the right place for me, and moved down to Kansas. *That* year the grasshoppers eat me up, and left me high and dry, and I wrote to William I believed if I could get down to Missouri maybe I 'd have a better chance,— that it was n't no use trying to stand out against grasshoppers. So William he helped me on to Missouri, and things looked right likely down there till a cyclone come along and blowed the house off our heads. Then I felt like we 'd better be a-moving out, and I 'd heard a heap about Texas, and I told Molly we was liable to get along better down there. So we all went on to Texas, and would have got along *extra* well down there if it had n't been for the cactus. Look like it just taken everything. The crops never had *no* show. Seem like there 's a sight of things in the world to go against a man. Finally I told Molly I believed we 'd better be getting back todes home, where I knowed the raising of things, and where there was n't no cyclones or grasshoppers or nothing. I felt like when I got out in a tobacco patch again I 'd kind of feel natchul and home.

like. Ain't no place like a man's old stomping-ground, you know. So William he helped me back, and here I am."

He looked around, somewhat apologetically.

Brother Jones cleared his throat. "You certainly done a sight of traveling," he said. "You lay off to rent, I reckon?"

"Well, yes, that's the idee,—rent," said Velorous.

"Mighty bad time of year," said Brother Jones. "I don't know of no ground anywheres around here that ain't already taken. But of course you can look around," he added, politely.

Mr. Bundy frowned. "Thain't a' acre of good land anywheres about here that ain't already bespoke," he said impatiently. "You might have knowed in reason this was n't no time of year to be coming back here to rent ground, Velorous. And if there *was* any land, I don't know as anybody'd have no ambition to rent to *you*. And even if you was to get some land, you too late to put in a wheat crop, and corn and tobacco ain't going to bring you in no money in less 'n a year, and all that time your family got to live on *air*,—'cause the

folks around here ain't going to fall over themselves to give you credit, I can tell you. I don't see what you come back here for anyhow!"

"Look like there was n't nothing else for me to do," apologized Velorous, humbly.

"That was because you never reasoned about it," said Mr. Bundy. "You just wanted to come home, and *come*. That 's all the reasoning you done! Or ever *did* do! A man with as big a family as you," he continued severely, "*ought* to reason about things. He ain't got no right to bring all them children into the world and then let 'em starve!"

Velorous drew a large red handkerchief out of his hat and mopped his forehead. "No, sir," he said, "that 's so. I reckon you 're right." He clasped the child closer to him, and gazed piteously at the fire, with helplessly-puzzled countenance, his long neck and shoulders sloping forward into an attitude of hopeless dejection.

"A man with all the family you got," continued Mr. Bundy, with increasing sharpness, "ought to get right down to something and stick at it! He ain't got no business traipsing all over creation. You ought to settled down

out there in Dakoty or somewherees and made a living for your family. The folks up here ain't got no use for rolling stones, and don't feel partic'lar rejoiced to see 'em rolling their way. They don't want 'em on *no* terms. No, sir, you ought to stayed out there where you was! We don't want no shiftless—"

"Joe," interrupted Brother Rolly, with authority, "I reckon you 've said a-plenty on that line. I don't know as you got any call to be judging other folks. You might have done a heap worse if you was in their shoes and had their trials. You sometimes let your reason get away with your heart, Joe."

Mr. Bundy's face flushed. He was silent.

The child's eyes, that had been roaming around the circle, had now fixed themselves on Brother Rolly's face. "Hi, shake hands, won't you?" said Brother Rolly. The boy slowly put forth a warm, brown little hand from the shawl that enwrapped him. "One of your 'n, I reckon?" Brother Rolly inquired of Velorous. Velorous's countenance cleared and brightened. "Yes, sir, that 's my four-year-old,—David, we call him. He 's our little lame boy. Got hisself hurt some way when he was a baby, down in Kansas, and

one of his legs ain't growed like the other. Poke out your *little* leg, son, and show Brother Rolly. And you see that foot 's littler 'n the other one, too. He don't limp so much now, but it keeps getting worse. But David he makes up in brain what he ain't got in leg. He 's going to be a smart man some day, if I do say it. He already knows some 'rithmetic and spelling."

The boy continued to gaze into Brother Rolly's face as if fascinated. Brother Rolly patted the red-stockinged "little" leg, and stroked it gently.

"I always tell Molly the rest of the children 's hern, but David he belongs to me," Velorous drawled on. "He 's the best friend I got, and always hanging around me."

Brother Rolly looked at David hungrily. Suddenly he put out his hands. "Won't you come set in my lap a little while, honey?" David shrank back into Velorous's bosom, and held tightly to his collar-band. "Now, I would n't do thataway if I was you, son," Velorous remonstrated. "That ain't polite. Go and set with Brother Rolly a minute, like a good boy." The child reluctantly allowed himself to be transferred to Brother Rolly's

lap, where he sat solemn and rigid and suspicious. Brother Rolly looked at him admiringly, patted his head with awkward tenderness, and trotted him on his knee. The boy stared at his father with tragic eyes. "Maybe he 'd like to look at my watch," said Brother Rolly, anxiously. "Look-a-here, honey." He drew an enormous silver watch from his vest pocket, and dangled it before David's eyes. "Listen at it tick, honey! Ain't that nice, now?" He clapped it against David's ear. The shock was too much for David's perturbed spirits. His under lip quivered, two large tears rolled down his cheeks, he set up a lusty wail, and reached out for his father. Velorous lifted him over into his lap. "I 'm ashamed of you, David," he protested. "You act like you ain't got no manners at all!" David hid his head in Velorous's bosom, and hugged him tightly. "He won't go from me to *nobody*," Velorous apologized to Brother Rolly, who looked alarmed and crestfallen. "David 's mighty skittish about strangers. I reckon after he knewed you he 'd like you first-rate. But he 's mighty hard to get acquainted with. He likes his own folks best,—specially me. He 's just plumb silly about his pappy. It 's 'Pappy,'

‘Pappy,’ all day. I can’t get shut of him no way! Don’t you feel bad about it, Brother Rolly,” he continued, observing the increasing gravity and sadness of Brother Rolly’s face. “He taken to you more ‘n to most strangers.” Brother Rolly made no answer. He put the watch back in its place, and gazed abstractedly at the fire.

“How’s Mis’ Barnes?” politely inquired Brother Jones.

“Only tolable,” said Velorous.

‘I spose she’s at her ma’s?’

“Yes, sir.”

“Reckon you all ‘ll stay there till you get a place?”

“That’s the idee.”

“I reckon you feel like you can’t find a place none too soon, then,” said Mr. Blevins.

“Yes, sir; that’s about the way of it.”

“The old lady and you never seemed to hit it off none too well,” continued Mr. Blevins.

“On-ly tol-able!” said Velorous, with deep solemnity.

Mr. Blevins slapped his knee and indulged in a loud laugh, which he suddenly interrupted to ask:

"Le 's see,—how many children you got now?"

Velorous told them off on his fingers. "Nine," he said, "counting the baby."

"Look to me like you raising a pretty full crop!" Mr. Blevins could not forbear the repetition of his joke. He gave his knee a more sounding slap, and went off into a wilder fit of laughter at his own wit.

"Four of 'em 's twins," said Velorous, by way of excuse. "Ought n't to be but seven by rights, if they 'd come one at a time."

"Looks like some has more than their share of affliction," said Brother Jones, sympathetically. "I got eight myself."

"Oh, I don't know as I ever looked on it as a' affliction," said Velorous, "though some might."

Brother Rolly broke from his reverie with a sigh. "There 's *some* folks would be mighty glad of a little of that sort of affliction," he said. "Look like the ways of Providence is strange! Now I reckon there ain't a man anywheres would have enjoyed having children of his own more than me, or would have took better care of 'em. But I try to think the Lord knows best! Marthy she says they might have turned out

bad, and give us a heap of trouble, and make us wish they never was born. But I tell her I 'd been willing to take the chances on that. Yes, sir, I 'd like to had a dozen, but I could have been the thankfullest ever was for *one!*"

"Well, Rolly, you done your share raising other folks' children," said Mr. Bundy.

"Yes, I reckon. But that ain't the same. I tell you a man wants to see his own flesh and blood growing up around him when he gets older. Marthy and me used to talk a heap when we was young about our children that was to come, and 'specially about our boy. We even had his name picked out for him,—John Jeemes, after her pa and mine. We don't talk no more about it now, but looks to me like I get lonesomer every year, and miss that boy more 'n anybody 'd believe, considering he never had no existence. I reckon I 've had a heap of blessings, and worked hard, and got along pretty well, but I 've gone through life hungry, so to speak. Yes, sir, I 'm a hungry man! I ain't complaining of the good Lord, but if he 'd just sent me that little boy I wanted so bad, even if he 'd been lame like this here little fellow, or blind, or deaf, or *anything*, why I 'd have died sat-

isified. But I always tell Marthy it 's bound to be made up to us somehow,—sometime,—and I 've always looked forward, when we get to the promised land, to the good Lord giving us a little boy of our own,—me and Marthy. I don't know as I do right in setting my heart on it so strong, but it always seemed to me like we going to get what we want worst, there,—like that 's what heaven 's for,—and I can't help expecting little John Jeemes 'll be the biggest blessing the good Lord 'll give me and Marthy there, for trying to live a' upright life, and do our duty! And I 'm looking for him with the eyes of faith!"

Brother Jones shifted his legs and slowly shook his head. "It 's against Scripture, Brother Rolly," he said. "It 's a mighty dang'-ous thing for folks to set up notions of their own that ain't backed up by Bible. 'There shall be no marriage nor giving in marriage. Ye shall be as the angels in heaven'."

A spasm of swift pain passed over Brother Rolly's face, and left it gray and drawn. His head fell forward on his breast.

Mr. Bundy sprang from his chair and shook Brother Jones roughly by the shoulder. "Shut that up, Gilly Jones!" he exclaimed,

his voice hoarse with anger. "Shut it right up! Ain't no man living can set up where I'm at and talk thataway to my old friend Rolly McKittrick! I may be a' infidel, but I think a heap of my friends! And any man that says my old friend Rolly McKittrick, that's lived honest and upright all his days, and give a helping hand to them in need, and fed the widow and the orphan, and done more than any man's duty, ain't a-going to get the desire of his heart in the next life,—ain't a-going to get that one little boy he's fairly aching for,—that man's *lying*, and that man's got Joe Bundy to fight! I want any gentleman that holds them opinions to step right out here!"

Mr. Bundy released Brother Jones's shoulder, planted himself in the middle of the floor, folded his arms, and glared fiercely around. There was no response to his invitation. Brother Jones retired farther behind Mr. Blevins's shoulder, and seemed absorbed in meditation.

"I may be a' infidel," continued Mr. Bundy, "but I know some Bible too! I know where it says 'Then shall your hearts be comforted'; 'He will give thee the desire of thy heart.' I know mighty well, and Rolly knows mighty

well, what 's the desire of his heart; and there ain't nothing nowheres, in heaven or earth, going to comfort his heart but that little boy he wants so bad. And I say his heart 's going to be comforted. I say he 's got the promise for it! *Got Bible for it!* I say a good man 's bound to get his reward,—bound to get justice done him! Yes, gentlemen, I say it 's bound to come in reason. I say I look for it! I say I count on seeing—on being there *to* see—my old friend Rolly McKittrick with the babe John Jeemes laying in his bosom!" Mr. Bundy stretched out both hands to Brother Rolly, who grasped them tightly, a glad light of joy and hope beaming in his eyes.

A deep silence fell upon the astonished circle, at the tremendous spectacle of Mr. Bundy's heart getting away with his reason. Mr. Tommy T. Nickins got up from his camp-stool as if dazed, and hurried to the front of the store. When he returned he bore in his hand a large, striped stick of peppermint candy, which he presented to David, who received it with a timid but rapturous grin.

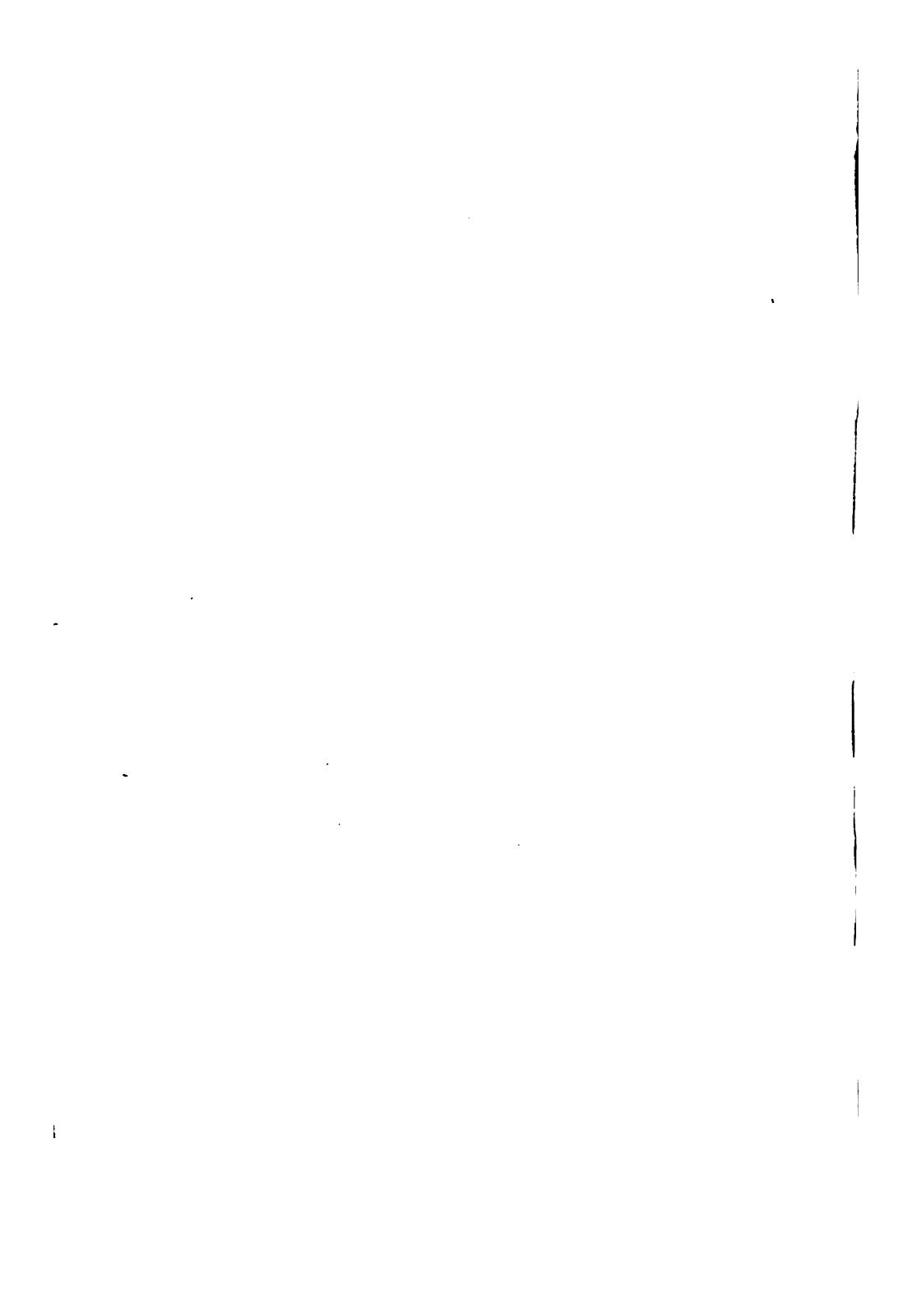
Brother Rolly slowly rose from his bench, wound the bright wool comforter about his neck, and buttoned his overcoat. His strong, steadfast eyes, in which now dwelt the light

of a great peace, sought the gentle, hopeless, force-lacking eyes of Velorous. "Velorous," he said, "I got the biggest kind of a notion to put you and Molly on my Green River farm this year. I 'd counted on running it myself, but I ain't as young as I used to be,—and I 'd like to see you get one real good chance."

Velorous was speechless under this embarrassment of good fortune, and could only sit with his mouth open.

Brother Rolly drew on his mittens. "I find two farms is too much to have on my mind, now I 'm getting older, and got the rheumatism. I don't know of no land anywheres else you can get, and you bound to support your family somehow. You bundle up Molly and the children, and I 'll send the wagon in for you all early Monday morning. There ain't no better land *nowheres*, if I do say it, and I 'll keep my eye on you, and we 'll see what we can do. Yes, sir, Velorous, you 've had mighty hard times, and I 'm mighty sorry for you. Things has certainly gone against you a heap. But the Devil 's run your business about long enough now, and we 'll see what *we* can do. Yes, sir, I expect first thing you know you 'll be getting along in the world!"

THE GRISSOMS



THE GRISSOMS

MR. MELISSA ALLGOOD stood over the apple jelly, stirring it with a large iron spoon, wherewith from time to time she drew up from the bubbling mass an amber thread of long-spun-out sweet-ness, at which she gazed with a critical eye.

"I tell you," she said, "there ain't anything in the world like heartfelt religion to make folks happy and keep 'em happy. Last week I went to Holiness Convention over at Sandersville, and had to go over to Green River to take the boat there at Sugg's Landing. Brother Gilly Jones took me to the landing in his wagon, and left me there on the bank. I did n't know how long I 'd have to wait for the boat, and there was n't any houses or folks near about that I knew of, so I set there on my valise, reading the Bible and waiting for an hour or more. Then I commenced to get hungry, and seen a fine patch of black-

berries a little ways up the bank, and went up after them. I was picking away and eating, when I seen somebody in a sunbonnet on the other side of the patch, and hollered at them. They raised up and put back their sunbonnet, and then I seen it was Sister Grissom that I 'd heard talk once at a meeting at the Station. I never supposed she 'd recollect me, but she did. 'Why, bless the Lord, Sist' Allgood!' she says; 'where d' you drop from?' I told her, and she said the boat would n't be by before evening, and for me to come up to her house and stay and break bread. I told her I 'd be glad to. So we finished picking the bucket full, and then went up to the house.

"I 'd always heard tell that Brother Grissom was a slow man. But laws! if he had n't had religion and the dyspepsy I 'd have called it by a stronger name! There was that little one-room log house, with a shed kitchen, and there Brother Grissom and Sister Grissom and them five children eat and slept and lived. There was a truck-patch around the house, with beans and potatoes, that Sister Grissom tended to, and that seemed to be doing right smart. And there was about four acres of the measliest tobacco patch you ever laid eyes on.

That was all the land they had to live off of, and Brother Grissom rented that on shares. I was plumb outdone to think of it, though, of course, I never let on. I knew Sister Grissom was raised to better things, and to see her going around there so cheerful and happy just got away with me. I never did see how a woman could get along with a slow man — not to say a lazy one. I 'm sanctified myself, but I just would n't live three seconds with a shiftless man.

“ Brother Grissom he was laying across the bed with the dyspepsy, he said, and not able to do no work. He certainly was one of the orneriest-looking men I ever did see — all loose-jointed, and his shoulders humped over like he never had no ambition. He was all yellow, too; from the janders, he said. We talked on, and Sister Grissom went out in the shed kitchen to get dinner.

“ There was two beds in the room, and the big fireplace, and a chest of drawers with glass knobs that had belonged to Sister Grissom's folks, and a table. There was n't any windows, and the doors they was hung on pieces of leather for hinges. There was some few split-bottom chairs. No carpet on the floor,

or nothing. But everything looked neat, and the children they was sweet and clean. The table had a piece of white sheeting over it; and a big Bible, or what was left of one, set on that. All the front part, to First Samuel, was gone, and part of Revelations. Sister Grissom had stitched what was left together with black flax thread. When Sister Grissom come in to set the table she lifted the Bible up right gentle-like, and laid it on one of the beds.

" I was plumb hungry, having got up so early, and rode so far, and the dinner tasted mighty good to me. There was a nice pone of corn bread, and some side of bacon, and the nicest kind of string beans, and potatoes, and Sister Grissom had made up them berries we picked into a big pie. She never had no pie-pans nor such to cook it in, so she cooked it in a big skillet, and not having no big dish, she had to set the skillet on the table in a plate. That pie certainly did look good and juicy. We all eat like we had n't had nothing for a week. After while I noticed that Sister Grissom had made two pies instead of one, and had the other setting at her end of the table in a little broken-handled skillet. I noticed

she helped me and Brother Grissom and the children all around to the pie in the big skillet, and helped herself out of the little one. Brother Grissom he asked for pie three times, and me twice, and every time she 'd help us out of the big skillet, till it was all gone. I thought I never tasted better pie than that.

"All during dinner Sister Grissom was telling about her experience, and how happy she was in the Lord, and how her spirit was singing praises to Him all the time for the wonderful things He had done for her, and the blessings He had poured out on her. Brother Grissom he 'd kind of groan now and then and bless the Lord too. Sister Grissom said look like the Lord had favored them above most, that not only had He give them great spiritual blessings, but they had a good shelter over their heads, and a good dinner to eat, and Squire Peglow done promised to lend them a cow yesterday, and she just more than praised God for that ; and the children they did too. And Sister Grissom said she did n't see how on earth the Lord could remember to take such loving care of 'em, and bless 'em so bountiful. I looked around the room, but seem like I could n't see no bountiful no-

wheres. It looked to me mighty like the Lord had forgot to remember them,—especially Brother Grissom. He looked plumb forsaken. I think he 'd eat too much pie, too.

“ After dinner Sister Grissom and me cleared up the table and washed the dishes. Directly Brother Grissom he commenced to groan, and felt so bad he had to lay down. Sister Grissom she flew around and made him some herb-tea right quick, and give him, and then she covered him up with a quilt and tucked it around him good and warm, and smoothed back his hair right gentle, like she had lifted the Bible. After while he eased down considerable, and then Sister Grissom and me went out in the shed kitchen and read the Bible and had prayers and glorified God.

“ About four o'clock in the evening Brother Grissom he rose and went down to the Landing to look for the boat, and Sister Grissom she went out to take some corn bread to an old sick nigger near by. While they was gone I got awful hungry, and I told the children I believe I 'd help myself to some corn bread out of the safe. When I looked in I seen that some of that pie in the little skillet was left, and I took a piece of that, and bit into it.

Well! I had to spit it out; it was that sour! If you believe me, that pie never had no sugar or sweetening of no kind in it! And there Sister Grissom had set, not feeling able to put no sugar in her pie, and eating it so cheerful and glad, and giving us all the good pie, and praising the Lord! It just beat my time! I could n't get over it at all. 'Lord,' I says, 'I thought I was sanctified and saved; but I 'm a lost sinner, Lord, by the side of Sister Grissom. I ain't got her faith,' I says; 'I could n't take the sweetening on trust like she does!'

"Brother Grissom he come back and said he seen the boat rounding the bend, and started down again with my valise. Sister Grissom she come in while I was pinning on my hat. 'Sister Grissom,' I says, 'before I go I want to know which one of all your blessings you feel called to praise the Lord most for,—most of all,' I says.

"'Well, Sist' Allgood,' she says, 'most of all for the Everlasting Arms; and next to that, for Mr. Grissom's dyspepsy.'

"'Why, Sister Grissom!' I says.

"'Yes,' she says, 'before he got the dyspepsy I was a proud, stiff-necked, worldly woman as ever was. I hankered after fine

clothes and things, and after making a big show on the outside. But when he taken the dyspepsy I just had to let the world go, and set my heart on heavenly things, and live in the Spirit, and put my trust in the Lord alone. And there it 's been ever since, praise His holy name! ”

THE FLOATING BETHEL

THE FLOATING BETHEL

“**W**ELL, bless the Lord for saving sinners!” Babe exclaimed one evening as she came out and sat on the porch by my side, untying the strings of her white sunbonnet, and letting it fall back on her shoulders. “I never told you about the Floating Bethel, did I? Well, last April, soon after I got sanctification, old Brother Hunter, over at Sandersville, heard me talk at Holiness Meeting here at the Station about how bad I wanted to work for the Lord and save souls, and the next week he wrote for me to come and go down the Ohio and the Mississippi with the Floating Bethel. Brother Hunter he’s just a real full-salvation man, and eat up with zeal, and he had went about and raised money for the Lord, and bought the bottom of an old boat cheap, and mended it up, and built two stories and a steeple on it, and named it the Floating

Bethel; and he said he was going to carry the Gospel into waste places, and convert the world.

“Well, of course, I just rejoiced and more than blessed the Lord for the chance to go, and I got ready and rode over to Sandersville, and we started from there down Green River to the Ohio. There was Brother Hunter, and Sister Hunter, and young Sister Hunter, their son Sam’s wife—one of the godliest women you ever saw,—and her baby, that was just three months old, but she said, when the people scoffed at her for going, that no amount of babies or husbands or the devil himself should hold her back from the Lord’s work, and go she would. Then there was Brother Gummy Bangs from the Station here, that Brother Hunter paid to go along and be held up as an example to the sinners, and do other odd jobs. And there was me. That was all the saved on board. Then there was a’ unregenerate deck-hand, and Sister Hunter’s little fice dog.

“The Floating Bethel was made this way: There was two stories. The lower one was one long room, like a church, with the pulpit at one end, and benches set in rows all the way back, and big doors opening out on both

sides, so 's the gang-planks could be laid right to them for the people to get in easy, and the devil would n't have any room to talk about religious folks holding themselves so up and above others. The top story had a hall down the middle, and sleeping-rooms on each side. We eat in the hall, and had one of the little rooms for a kitchen. Then there was a real nice little steeple on top. Of course, we never had no way to make ourselves go, so Brother Hunter 'd have to hire a steamboat or tug-boat to pull us from place to place. When we left Sandersville, he got the Green River Packet to take us a piece.

“ Most all of Sandersville was there to see us off. The saved on the bank they all sung a hymn and waved their handkerchiefs at us. I felt plumb scared and lonesome when we pulled off, and wished I was back home at the Station. But Sister Hunter she went upstairs to get supper, and Brother Hunter he read the Bible and talked and shouted till I got ashamed of myself, and did n't feel afraid any more, but would have just been willing to jump right out into the river if I 'd had the call from the Lord, and me not knowing how to swim a lick, neither.

“When I woke up next morning we was tied up at a town, and the packet it had left us, and Brother Hunter and Brother Gummy and the deck-hand was out throwing around posters that Brother Hunter had had struck off at Sandersville, like this :

ETERNITY!

Where will you spend it?

THE FLOATING BETHEL

is here!

Preaching Day and Night.
Come one! Come all!

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD!
FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME!

“It was wonderful to see how quick it got norated around, and how the people was moved by the Spirit to turn out. By ten o'clock there was a big crowd standing on the bank looking at the Floating Bethel, and then Brother Hunter he got back and invited them

all, black and white, in to hear the preaching. Brother Hunter preached, and me and Brother Gummy sung, and young Sister Hunter played the accordeon when the baby 'd let her. Brother Hunter he 'd give it to the sinners, and preach about the burning pit and the Old Adam and the carnal mind and the wages of sin is death, and how smart the devil was, and how deceiving, and how he 'd catch 'em all first thing they knew, and how maybe they 'd die that very night, unbelieving and unregenerate, and go straight to hell, and burn forever. Then he 'd tell 'em about salvation, and that now was their chance to lay hold on free grace and forgiveness of sins, and maybe it would be the last time the Spirit would ever speak to them. Then he 'd call on Brother Gummy to stand up and let the people see a man the Lord had saved mightily — snatched back from hell-fire — a man that was once lost in sin and served the devil, that used to drink and cuss and fight and shoot, — a regular *limb* — saved, born again, justified, sanctified, and regenerated wholly! Brother Gummy he 'd stand up and turn around and let the sinners look at him good, and then we 'd sing a song, him and me, with the accordeon, 'Amazing

Grace,' or 'The Pleasing Path,' or something like that:

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saves a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I 'm found,
Was blind, but now I see!

We are passing away, we are passing away,
We are passing away to the great Judgment Day.

"But it was 'The Pleasing Path' that Brother Gummy sung best:

"Why do I shun the Pleasing Path
That sinners love so well?
Because it is the Way of Wrath,
The Open Road to Hell!

The Open Road to Hell,
The Open Road to Hell!
Because it is—the Way of Wrath,
The Open Road — to Hell!

"It would have done your soul good to see how fierce Brother Gummy sung that word 'hell.' He just dwelt and swelt on it. Seem to me like it must shake the sinners up to the very foundation. Then any of us saved that

felt led would get up and tell our experience, and shout. It was a moving sight to see young Sister Hunter get up there with the baby in her arms and tell what religion had done for her. The baby'd always get scared and cry, but that never fazed young Sister Hunter; she'd just talk and shout as long as she was moved of the Spirit, cry or no cry.

"We'd have preaching pretty near all day, and then again at night. The sinners would mostly get warmed up at night. We stayed at that first place three days, and got the folks considerably stirred up over their souls, and then a tug-boat come along, and Brother Hunter said he'd sowed and watered and the Lord must quicken, and we went on to the next place. We kept on down the Ohio, stopping at Evansville and Henderson and Shawneetown and Paducah and all the little towns between. Sometimes we would n't stop more than a day; it was just as Brother Hunter felt led, and as the boats come along to pull us. Sometimes we'd have to quit right in the middle of a sermon and run the congregation out and move on. When we got to Cairo we stopped a whole week, and had a regular hallelujah time. I could tell you of some wonderful

things the Lord did there. Then Brother Hunter said it did seem a pity, being that close, not to give the folks at St. Louis a chance of salvation,—that being such a terrible lost place, a plumb Sodom and Gomorrah and Satan's stomping ground. So we went up there. The first day or two there was n't anybody come to hear us, because we had got out of posters by that time. But Brother Hunter he had some more struck off, and hired boys to throw them over town, and then the people commenced to fairly roll in.

"One day, after we 'd been there three or four days, me and young Sister Hunter went uptown to buy some saxony to knit the baby a sack. The store we went into was a great big place, taking up a whole square. A man told us where to find the saxony counter, and we went on back, and young Sister Hunter commenced to price the saxony. I was plumb outdone by the worldliness in that store! There was all sorts of things to buy that you ever heard tell of, and the ladies they was pulling and dragging all kinds of goods about, and talking as fast as they could, and half of them looked like they was plumb distracted. It made me miserable to think how people was

wearing out their lives getting clothes when they never had no time to *think* of getting salvation. Young Sister Hunter says to the pretty young lady that showed us the saxony: 'It looks to me like you all ain't got much room for the Lord in St. Louis. I expect the devil is plumb rampant here,' she says. The young lady she looked at me and young Sister Hunter like we was curious varmints, and whispered something to the young lady at the next counter about us, and they both laughed.

"I kept looking around, though it did hurt my soul awful to see so much vanity. Once I thought I'd shut my eyes and would n't look any more; but just then I saw such a pretty lady at the next counter, with such lovely yellow hair and rosy cheeks and white skin, and dressed so beautiful, that I could n't keep my eyes off of her. Then there was a young girl with her that had awful pretty yellow hair, too, frizzed out a' inch or two all over her head. I could n't see the girl's face, but there was something about her motions that reminded me of somebody, I could n't tell who. I knew I never had no friends with such pretty hair as that. I kept watching for her to turn her face around. Presently she did. 'Maggie!'

I says, running over quick, and hugging and kissing her, 'Why, Maggie Marks! Is it really you? You sweet thing. I'm *so* glad to see you!' Her face turned red in all the white places, and she kind of drew off. I supposed she was ashamed of me and my old black dress and hat, and I could n't blame her much, for according to *her* light my clothes did look mighty bad by the side of her silk dress with the little flowers and lace all over it, and her big hat with piles of feathers. 'Maggie,' I says, 'don't you know me? You have n't forgot Babe, have you? Don't you know how you and me used to play together all the time at the Station, and be such dear friends? Why, I'd have knew you anywheres, in spite of your hair turning light!'

"'I never knew you just at first,' she says, 'not expecting to see you here.'

"'I'm here with the Floating Bethel,' I says, 'down on the river. And it's *so* nice to see somebody from home! I've been feeling so lonesome. And I'm so surprised to find you here, Maggie,' I says. 'When did you come, and where are you working?' 'I ain't working anywheres,' she says. 'Why, then you're married, of course!' I says. 'Well, I

do think you might have wrote us something about it,' I says. 'No; I ain't married neither,' she says. 'I 'm just visiting a lady friend,—that lady there,' she says, pointing at the beautiful lady, who 'd just walked off a little piece. 'Well, it 's *mighty* nice to see you again,' I says. 'And you must come right down to see me,' I says. 'I 'll be here two or three weeks, down at the Floating Bethel, on the river. You won't have no trouble finding it.' 'All right,' she says, 'maybe I will; I 've got to go now.' The lady was standing in the store door, looking back after her, and she run and caught up, and I saw them get in a fine carriage with two horses, and ride off.

"I felt right hurt at Maggie not asking me to come and see *her*. But I knew how pride puffeth up, and did n't blame her for being ashamed of the outside of me. Still, when I thought how Maggie and me had lived next door since we was babies, and till her ma died when she was fourteen, and her pa took to drink, and they left the Station, and how we was together all the time, and used to spend the night with each other pretty near every night, and play 'lady-come-to-see' in our stable loft all the rainy days, and gather black-

berries and sweet-gum and hazelnuts and things, and just growed up together, so to speak, why then I did feel pretty bad to think of her noticing my old clothes. I just felt like I could n't help crying. But then I remembered that it was n't Maggie treating me thataway, but the devil himself, that loves to persecute the righteous, 'Yea, and all them that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution,' and I did n't lay it up against her, because I kept remembering those days we played together, and that she was my friend.

"Young Sister Hunter had got her saxony by this time, and we went on back to the Floating Bethel. I was glad to get out of the worldliness of them stores and streets. People was a-pushin and a-crowding each other, and gazing in the store windows, and never speaking to each other, or acting a bit neighborly, or like they lived in the same town.

"All during preaching that night I could n't get Maggie out of my head. I kept wondering how she fell in with such rich friends, and how she ever got to St. Louis anyhow. I 'd heard, a year or two after they left the Station, that Maggie had gone to work in some big cotton mills, and was making good

money. I could n't account no way for her being away over in St. Louis, and with such stylish folks, because, though Maggie was always a nice, sweet girl, her folks was shiftless people, all except her ma. I tried not to think about the way Maggie treated me, and sung as loud as I could, and did all I could to help save the sinners. There was a pretty good crowd there, and lots of them that had come to scoff stayed to pray. There was all sorts. Some would come there drunk, and lay down and go to sleep on the benches. Lots was in rags, and awful dirty. Then there was nicer dressed people, too, though the Lord knows if their hearts was any cleaner.

“After we 'd been there about two weeks the Spirit commenced to be poured out consida ble; there was a good many convictions, and a good many come through and got religion, and commenced living righteous. One night about this time, while Brother Gummy and me was singing the opening hymn,

“With all my sins I come to Thee !
Wash me in the Blood of the Lamb !
Its cleansing power will set me free,
Wash me in the Blood of the Lamb !

it come to me all of a sudden that I must get up and preach on that line. I felt the strongest kind of leading — just moved mightily of the Spirit. So, after we finished the song, I went up and said to Brother Hunter, 'Brother Hunter, I feel called to preach this evening.' So he went and set with the people, and I got up in the pulpit and read from First John, chapter first and second, and preached from the text, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' I could n't tell you just what I did say — though, of course, it was n't me saying it, but the Spirit saying it through me. I just knew I felt like Jesus was standing right there, and I was pleading with 'em all to come and fall down at his dear feet, and be washed from all unrighteousness, and made whiter than snow. I felt somehow like I was talking to some lost soul having its last chance. I told 'em it did n't make any difference what they 'd done, or what their sins was; that he was mightier than the power of sin, and could sweep it all off with one touch, if they 'd just call on him — just lift up their eyes! I told 'em how dear their souls was to the Master, and how he 'd come down and suffered and died for them, and how loving he was — how

he was standing there with his arms stretched out, and his eyes like mothers' eyes, longing to save 'em and blot out their sins. I just wept and plead with 'em. Look like the words come quicker than I could say them. When I finished I was completely give out. I went down out of the pulpit, and Brother Gummy he started up 'Are you ready for the Judgment Day?' I was so faint I went over to the water-bucket that set by the door to get me a drink. I started to throw the water that was left in the cup outdoors, and run right up against somebody standing outside in the shadow. I could see it was a woman. She pulled herself back in the dark, quick, and when I reached out my hand after her, she run along the gang-plank, and up the bank, and was gone.

"About a week after that I was sitting out on the guards reading the Bible to an old blind woman and a cripple boy that was seeking the way, and trying to teach 'em all I could before we left, for Brother Hunter said we 'd have to be moving on in a day or two ; and here come a boy dressed in blue clothes and red braid, and give me a note. I opened it quick. It said: 'Maggie is dying and

wants you. Come if possible. The messenger will bring you.' There was n't any name signed. It had on the outside, 'Miss Babe Baxter, Floating Bethel.' I run quick for my hat, and me and the boy walked a piece, and then took a street-car, and rode a long ways. Finally we got off, and walked a square more, and then the boy opened the gate before a fine brick house with colored glass in the windows, and white stone steps, and took me to the door and rung the bell. Maggie's friend, the same lady that was in the store with her that day, come to the door and let me in. Her face was all white and pale now. 'I would n't have sent for you,' she says, 'but Maggie's been calling for you three days and nights, and the doctor says she can't live.'

"I followed her upstairs. The carpet was so soft and pretty I hated to step on it. There was some other ladies in the hall upstairs, whispering and crying. She took me in a room and shut the door. Maggie was laying up high on the pillows, her eyes all bright, and big red spots on her cheeks, and her face all thin. She put out her arms when she saw me. 'I thought you never was coming!' she says. 'I 've been waiting and waiting for

you. I was afraid to die by myself.' I kissed her, and held her close in my arms. 'Darling child,' I says, 'you must n't be afraid to die. Why, it 's lots better than living. When you die you 'll think you never *did* live before. The dear, sweet Jesus and the dear Father 's just a-waiting there for you !' 'Oh, I ain't so afraid of meeting *them*,' she says. 'I don't mind *that* so much. It 's my mother I can't bear to see! That 's what I can't stand! Oh, I 'm so scared, Babe! It 's awful to die!' She held my arm so tight it hurt me. 'Why, darling,' I says, 'you just talking thataway because you ain't at yourself. Why, your dear ma 's just a-waiting there, and a-*longing* for you. Why, you 're her own dear child, Maggie.' 'No, I ain't!' she says. 'I ain't her child no more! I ain't good; I ain't good like I used to be, Babe. You don't know, you don't understand. We 're all wicked here. I never meant to be, Babe, but—I 'll tell you all about it sometime when I can talk better. Now I 'm afraid—afraid! Oh, Babe, help me! hide me! Don't let mother see me! I could n't stand that !'

"Look to me like my heart stood still. But I held her tighter and closer. 'Maggie, dear

child,' I says, 'you are safe! It's the dear Jesus that loves you and will save you from your sins. He's done said so, dear. Just look up to him, and he'll forgive you, and take you right to his bosom. That's what he come into the world for, to save sinners. And you ain't the only sinner, Maggie; we're all sinners till we get the love of Christ in our hearts. One ain't no worse than the other, though some has been tempted a heap more. He don't hate you because you have been tempted and sinned. He knows all about it, dear, and loves you just the same. And so do I, too, just the same as when we used to swing and play dolls in the hayloft all day together. Don't you remember it, Maggie? And Jesus is right here with his tender, loving eyes, bending right over you, dear child, calling you home to him. Just put all your trust in him, and don't take no trouble about it, but leave it all to the dear Master.'

"'But the sins!' she says, shivering. 'There's so many, Babe,—they're so black!'

"'He'll wash 'em all off,' I says, 'till you're whiter than snow!'

"'But do you reckon he could wash 'em off right *quick*—before mother 'll see me?' she says.

“‘Indeed he can,’ I says, ‘and he’s washing mightily right now! I can just *see* the spots fading off, dear, and your soul getting clean and white, like you was a little baby. They’re coming off one by one, bless the Lord! You just ought to see how he’s making them fairly fly! They’re pretty near all gone now, glory to God! And when your ma sees you there won’t be *none* on you, and she won’t never know, Maggie. Just think of it! You’ll just be her same little girl that she left! I can just see them getting dimmer and dimmer and dimmer—and now you’re plumb white and shining! Glory! Bless the dear Lord!’

“She fell back in my arms, smiling so sweet and peaceful, and I just wept and wept for joy.

“The lady was kneeling at the foot of the bed, crying like her heart would break. Maggie fell into a deep sleep, and I still kept my arms around her, tight and close, and kept a-praying and blessing God. Finally I felt something, and looked around, and there was the lady kneeling by me. She had picked up the hem of my old black dress, and was kissing it. I put one of my arms around her. ‘Sister,’ I says, ‘the message is for you too! Let us pray together!’

“ Maggie lived several hours, but she slept all the time, and never knew nothing more, and passed away so peaceful and blessed, in my arms.”

Babe paused to dry her eyes on the skirt of her sunbonnet.

“ And Maggie’s friend? ” I said.

“ She ’s nursing in a big hospital. She went right off to learn nursing. I hear from her every week. Her sins is all forgive and blotted out, and she ’s happy in the Lord, and working day and night with the poor and sick for the Master’s sake.”

A SANCTIFIED GIRL



A SANCTIFIED GIRL

BABE and I sat out on the front porch after supper. The moonlight fell fair and white, lending its touch of enchantment to the old silver-poplar tree at the gate, to the ancient rail-fence, overgrown with vines, that ran along the side of the yard, and to the field of softly undulating wheat beyond. It also fell kindly upon the long, dusty street of the Station, and upon the homely houses scattered along its sides. Babe sat silent for some time, a rapt look on her face, and her fair hair making around her head in the moonlight a nimbus such as might have crowned some lovely saint of the olden time. Finally she began to speak.

“I’ve always felt,” she said, “ever since I got religion, that I was called to convert the heathens. When I went with the Floating Bethel down the river last spring, I knew the Lord had led me, and I felt dreadful when

Brother Hunter run clear out of money, and we had to leave the Floating Bethel down in the Mississippi and get home the best way we could. But after while I begun to see the hand of the Lord in it, and that he never had no intentions for me to do missionary work at home, anyway, where there 's plenty of others to do it, but that he was calling me out to save the poor heathens, that never heard tell of Jesus, and spend their time eating each other up. And then I commenced to yearn over them, and cry over them, and could n't sleep nights thinking about them, and they got so heavy on my mind I felt like I could n't hardly live. Then I took it to the Lord, and told him what a misery I was in about them, and for him to give me a plain showing whether or not he wanted me to go over to Africa and preach the Gospel to them. Then I shut my eyes and opened the Bible, and the first words my eyes fell on was 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' I knew then that the Lord had called me, and made up my mind to go. I set right down and wrote to the Missionary Board that I felt called to convert the heathens, and the next missionary

they needed, to send for me. And I told Aunt Margaret to be making up her mind to see me go to Africa ; that I had the call from the Lord.

“ So I ’ve just been waiting ever since to be led out. But, of course, while I wait I don’t want to hold my hands, and every time I get a chance to work for Jesus at home I do it. And it was about some wonderful work the Lord helped me to do at home that I started to tell you.

“ Week before last the camp-meeting started up over at Dixie, about ten miles from the Station here. I never had no way on earth to go ; but Monday night I got a call to go. A voice said to me as plain as could be, ‘ There ’s work for you to do at Dixie ’ ; and I was so certain about it that I got up at about half past four Tuesday morning and did the ironing before breakfast, so as to be ready. Sure enough, just as I was washing up the breakfast dishes, here come Brother Rolly McKittrick driving up in his wagon, and told me and Aunt Margaret to come and go to camp-meeting with him. So we shut up the house and went.

“ The very first tent we come to when we got there, who should poke their head out of

it but Sister Youree, and give me and Aunt Margaret an invite to stay with her during the meeting. Sister Youree is from Sandersville neighborhood, and is just a godly, righteous woman, if there ever was one, and a shouting, abounding Christian. But that son of hers,—that Payton Youree,—if ever there was a complete limb of Satan, it was Payt! He was eat up with vanity and worldliness, and just went through the world a-laughing. And here was Payt done come to camp-meeting with his ma just for the fun he could get out of it, and had brought his top-buggy along, so 's he could fly high and have a big time with the girls. And while his ma would be in meeting, praying and mourning over his sins, here he 'd be gallivanting over the country in that top-buggy, or setting back on the very back seat of the pavilion, scoffing, and making fun of the preachers and the mourners. I knew his ways, because at camp-meeting the year before, when I was still unregenerate, I had rode in that buggy with him no little, and had set on the back seat with him, too, and scoffed, and eat candy and peanuts.

“The minute Sister Youree told me Payt was there, I saw all in a flash the work the

Lord had for me to do, and the reason he made a way for me to come.

"I never saw Payt till dinner that day. We eat out under the trees, and he set next to me, and just laughed and carried on and made jokes the enduring time. And when Sister Youree and Aunt Margaret got up and went to wash the dishes, Payt he says to me, 'You be ready at four, and I 'll bring the buggy around for a ride.' That was the first chance I had got at him, and I says, 'Payton Youree,' I says, 'there was a time, when I was bound in sin and wandering in darkness, when buggy-rides and other such works of the devil might have had charms for me,' I says, 'and I don't deny it. But them days are past. I have been led out of Babylon, and have got a new heart; and the Old Adam has been washed out of my soul so complete,' I says, 'that there ain't a single scrap of him left, bless the Lord! And which I wish you could say the same, Payt,' I says.

"Payt he threw back his head, and laughed fit to kill. 'Oh!' he says, 'if *that* 's the way you feel about it, all right! Of course, I could n't expect no *sanctified* girl to ride with such a deep-dyed sinner as me!' he says.

“ ‘Payton Youree,’ I says, ‘I hope and pray the day will soon come when you ’ll say them words “deep-dyed sinner” in dead earnest,’ I says, ‘and realize your lost and miserable condition!’ Payt he laughed again, like it tickled him nearly to death. ‘I ain’t either lost or miserable,’ he says; ‘I ’m enjoying life the best kind — a heap more than some others I know of!’

“ I set there under the trees and looked at him, and wondered what on earth I could do. I saw the prince of darkness had a strong hold on him, and that it would be a big battle. And you know the Bible says if you want anything *real* bad, to fast and pray for it; and that ‘this kind cometh not forth save by prayer and fasting.’ And seemed to me like I wanted Payt to be saved the worst that ever was. So I made up my mind then and there, and told the Lord about it, that not another bite of victuals would I eat till that poor lost boy got convicted of sin, and converted and wholly regenerated; and that I ’d never stop praying a single minute, except when I was asleep. And I told the Lord I had faith he ’d answer my prayer; and that if he ’d let me convert Payt, it would give me a heap more hope of converting the heathens.

“So I set right in to praying, then and there; and whatever else I’d do or say, I’d be praying that prayer underneath it all the time, ‘Lord, save Payt; save him, dear Jesus!’ And all during the meeting that afternoon I kept it up, even when I saw Payt ride by the pavilion with Almira May Peglow in the buggy with him, diked out in a new summer-silk. And when supper-time come, I told Sister Youree I did n’t care to eat anything, and went inside the tent and prayed while the rest eat.

“Same way the next morning. I fixed myself up to look as nice as I could—for the Bible says, ‘When ye fast be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast; but when thou fast anoint thy head and wash thy face, and the Lord which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly,’—but I never took no breakfast. And Sister Youree she felt so bad about it I had to take her to one side, and tell her I felt called to do some fasting, and for her not to let on to anybody about it; and she promised. Payt he set there at the table, and looked as gay and carnal-minded as ever. It was the same old story that afternoon—him and Almira May

out buggy-riding. But that night he come to meeting, and I just prayed and prayed for the Lord to convict him of sin. But he set back there on the back seat with Almira May and the rest of the unsaved, and laughed and talked clear through meeting.

"Of course I talked to him, and give him the strong meat of the Word whenever I got a chance at him; but I was in the meetings pretty near all the time, and would n't see him except for a minute or two. But then I 'd talk to him right from the heart, and tell him how dreadful I felt about the state of his soul, and what a big interest I took in his salvation. But it never seemed to make no impression on him.

"Thursday of course I never eat a bite, though I was commencing to feel mighty weak and gone, and the devil was saying everything he could think of to discourage me. And that day Sister Youree and Payt and Aunt Margaret and me was invited to Sister Gunby's to dinner. Sister Gunby lives there in Dixie, in a fine house, and is noted for her housekeeping. I set down at the table just for politeness; but when I laid eyes on all them good things I knew I better get

away as quick as I could. 'Excuse me, Sister Gunby,' I says, 'I 'll go out and swing the children. I don't feel like eating to-day.' They all looked surprised—especially Payt. He had his mouth full of chicken-pie! But I could n't say another word, I was so hungry and so full of cry, so I went out in the yard with the children, and just prayed without ceasing, for I could feel the Old Adam rising in me, and the Carnal Mind. And that night Payt come to meeting again; but he was just as unconcerned as ever. When Brother Cheatham called on the mourners to come up, Payt never budged. He never even stood up to be prayed for.

"Next day was Friday. I still kept up my fasting, though I could just feel myself getting thin. I would n't give down a bit in spirit. 'Jesus, Master,' I says, 'I know you 're just trying my faith. I know you 're going to save Payt's precious soul before you get through; and I 'm going to hold out faithful to the end.' That night Payt was at meeting again. I just knew Payton Youree was convicted of sin, and that the Spirit was stirring him to the very dregs; but that boy set back there and eat peanuts! That night after I

come from meeting, and Aunt Margaret and Sister Youree had gone to sleep, I just got down on the floor and *rassled* in prayer for Payt, and kept it up all night, till the dawn begun to streak up the sky. I told the Lord, if he never was going to answer another prayer of mine, to answer this; and to save Payt's soul if it was the last thing he ever did.

"Saturday I was so wore out with the fast-ing and being up praying all night that I could n't get up out of bed. I felt like I was certainly going to die. But I was satisfied. I knew I 'd be dying in a good cause, and that my body had a heap better die than Payt's soul. I got strength when evening come to drag myself over to the pavilion; for I just felt sure the Lord would bless my prayers for Payt that night. I kept watching for Payt to come in and set down. It was n't no earthly use—there was n't no Payt to be seen. We had a glorious meeting; there was forty mourners, I reckon, and more than half of them come through and rejoiced in full salva-tion. I went from bench to bench among the sinners, exhorting and talking the best I could, being so weak. Lots of them I talked to got convicted and went up to the mourners' bench.

It was a wonderful outpouring; but all the time there was that pain at my heart, 'Yes, they 're all here but Payt; everybody but Payt—the one lost sheep I 've gone out into the desert to bring home.' Seemed to me like it would kill me. I knew I ought to be resigned to the will of God, and ought to be a-shouting and rejoicing like the rest; but somehow I could n't. The thought of Payt just pulled at my very heartstrings. I wanted him to get saved, and that quick, for I did n't know what minute he might drop off in his sins, and be eternally lost. Look like I was in a perfect fever, and like my soul never stopped crying out to the Lord about him. The mourners was sitting and kneeling about in the straw around the pulpit, groaning and crying over their sins; and I knew I ought to be trying to comfort them, though I felt more like I needed comfort myself. So I stooped over one of them, and laid my hand on his shoulder. 'Brother,' I says, 'just lay your burden on Jesus—on the dear, loving Saviour. He 'll take it for you,' I says, 'and give you a new heart, and a new song. Let him bear your sins for you,' I says, 'and rest your poor head on his loving heart.' The mourner

raised his head up out of his arms, and looked at me. It was Payt—Payt, with the tears on his cheeks, and the misery in his eyes, and his shoulders fairly shaking with grief! I just give one shout,—I reckon I 'll never have such another in all my life, so full of joy and thanksgiving,—and then I fell down by him, just as dead as I could be.

“ I never knew anything till morning. Then I come to, in the tent, and Sister Youree and Aunt Margaret was trying to pour some broth in my mouth. ‘ Has Payt come through yet?’ I says; ‘ is he saved?’ “ No,’ says Sister Youree, ‘ he 's still a-mourning and seeking.’ ‘ Then take it away !’ I says; ‘ how can I eat when Payt's soul is hungering and starving after righteousness ?’

“ ‘ Is that what you been a-fasting for?’ says Sister Youree, breaking down and crying. ‘ Well, bless the Lord! But you 've all but killed yourself!’ She got down on her knees and we both commenced to pray. Right in the midst of our praying I heard a keen shout outside the tent, and then another; and the next second Payt was standing in the tent door, his face lit up with perfect joy. He just give one shout after another. He praised

God for washing away of sin, and full salvation, and a new heart, and indwelling of the Spirit. And the people in the other tents heard him, and commenced to drop in, one by one; and if there ever was a Pentecost time, that was. Everybody shouted, and Payt the loudest of all. And I just laid there on the cot and did what rejoicing I could; and Sister Youree poured the broth down me between times. My soul was like John says, in the highest heaven; and I shouted all I could with my poor mortal body. I just felt like I must make my voice reach through the pearly gates and all the crowds of angels, clean to the great white throne. I wanted the Lord to know how my heart rejoiced. I wanted every angel in heaven to know about Payt's salvation, so they could rejoice. And I wanted every poor lost sinner and heathen on earth to know it, too, and what the dear Lord in his mercy had done for Payt, and could do for them. I wanted to tell them all what a grand thing it is to have the love of God in your heart, and love him every minute and every hour, with all your strength, and just want to give up your whole life to him—”

She ceased speaking, and with glowing

countenance and clasped hands gazed straight before her. By the joy and tenderness in her eyes, by the peace upon her lips, by an occasional fervent ejaculation, half under her breath, of "Bless the Lord!" "Jesus, Master!" I knew that her pure soul looked into a holy-of-holies, whither world-blinded eyes could not penetrate; that her spirit dwelt in the light of the love of God.

THE warm, summer days, followed by evenings cool and dewy, slipped slowly by. Everything moved slowly at the Station. Babe seemed the one bit of energy in the easy-going neighborhood. She was busy from rise to set of sun; now with her flowers, now with her vegetable garden, now cleaning and cooking, now nursing some sick neighbor, but first and last and always, "blessing the Lord." She talked much about her mission to the heathen, and went to the post-office every day to get the wished-for letter from the Missionary Board.

One Sunday morning early, as Babe was expounding Bible to me with much eloquence, we were interrupted by the noise of wheels, and beheld a horse and buggy draw up in

front of the gate. "It looks just like Payt's horse!" Babe exclaimed, breathlessly, over my shoulder.

Sure enough, there, coming in the front gate and up the walk, was a fine-looking young man, who seemed to be striving to maintain an expression of proper solemnity and dignity. Babe went out on the porch to meet him. "Howdy, Miss Babe?" he said, with beaming eyes, shaking her hand vigorously. "I could n't stay away any longer. Felt like I 'd have to come and see how you was getting on." "We 're well, Brother Payt," Babe demurely responded, "and still praising the Lord. How 's your ma?" "Oh, the old lady is alive and kicking," was his respectful reply. I could imagine the severe rebuke in Babe's eyes, for he immediately caught his breath and answered in a very different tone, "She 's enjoying good health at present, thank you, ma'am."

They vanished into the sitting-room. Presently the sound of the organ and of two voices in excellent accord floated out to me:

I 've found a friend in Jesus; He 's everything
to me;
He 's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

The Lily of the Valley ; in Him alone I see
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole !

He 's the Lily of the Valley ; the Sweet Flower
of Eden ;
The Fairest of Ten Thousand to my soul !

After a short while Babe ran into my room. "Brother Payt wants to take me to Basket Meeting over at Zion Church," she said. "We 'll be back to supper. Don't you get lonesome. Just read my Bible, and think about the Lord, and you 'll be all right. Bless the Lord for sending me a way to go !" She quickly donned a simple white dress, guiltless of ruffle or trimming, and a small black sailor hat with a white band around it. The only ornament she wore was a bunch of purple clematis that I pinned on her bosom.

I saw them safely off, and went out for a day in the woods. Babe reached home before I did that afternoon. When I arrived I met her coming out of a large closet in the sitting-room, whither she always went to pray. Dozens of times during the day I would see her steal off and go to this closet, and come away with a joyous light in her eyes. This

time, however, I saw that they were red with weeping. She refused to tell me the reason of her trouble, and went out to put supper on the table. Afterward, when we sat out as usual on the porch, she broke down and told me all.

“It’s all on account of Payt,” she sobbed. “I never suspicioned nothing at all, and just loved Payton Youree as a brother in the Lord and a saved sinner. And to-day, coming from meeting, Payt said how we two ought to feel mighty near and dear to each other, after my praying and fasting that way to save his soul; that that ought to be a’ everlasting tie between us. I told him yes, indeed—that all the regenerated ones is dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. ‘But can’t they be no more than brothers and sisters?’ Payt says. ‘Brother Payt,’ I says, ‘I don’t know what you mean,’ I says. ‘You know, and I know, that there ain’t any higher or grander kinship than brothers and sisters in the Lord.’ Payt he turned around and faced me square. ‘Look here, Babe,’ he says, ‘I don’t want any more foolishness from you. I love you, and you know it, and you got to marry me.’ ‘Payton Youree,’ I says, ‘let go my hand, and set on your own side the buggy. The very idea,’ I

says, 'of your daring to fall in love with me! The presumption of it! When I have told you a many a time that my life belongs to the Lord, and that I 've got the call to convert the heathens. You know,' I says, 'that I would n't *look* at any man alive.'

" 'If you never cared for me,' Payt says, 'what made you do all that praying and fasting to save my soul? You never done no such for nobody else!' 'No,' I says, 'I never. But I *would* do it for any poor lost soul, if I had the call. It was *your soul* I loved, Payt,' I says, 'not *you*!' 'Well, my soul *is* me, ain't it?' Payt says. 'Payton Youree,' I says, 'you need n't be trying to use any of the devil's arguments with me,' I says. 'My mind is made up. I 'm going to live for the Lord alone. You know what the Bible says, "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, that she may please her husband." My life belongs to the Lord,' I says, 'and the heathens. And I won't let any mortal man come in between me and the poor heathens.'

" Payt he set there and looked at me. 'You call yourself a sanctified girl,' he says, 'but I

got another name for you.' 'What name?' I says. 'A *flirt!*' he says. 'There now! That's what I think about you.' I just burst out crying as loud as I could. 'What do you mean,' I says, 'by using such words to me?' I says.

"'Any man,' Payt says, 'has got the right to think, when a girl fasts pretty near a week for his salvation, that she likes him a heap. And I knew you *used* to like me some—' 'Yes,' I says, 'but it was before I got my new heart.' 'Well, your old heart was a long sight the best,' he says, 'and I wish you'd kept it. And then your taking such a big interest in my salvation made me feel like you cared a whole lot; and when I got religion I got it more to please you than anything else—' 'No such a thing!' I says. 'It was because the Lord deeply convicted you of sin.'—'And now you done misled me all along the way, and raised my expectations, and got me to liking you so much I 'm plumb miserable, you ready to throw me over and have done with me, just because I ain't a heathen with a black skin. Never mind,' he says; 'you 'll be sorry for it. I 'm going to backslide just as fast as I can. I don't want to have nothing

to do with religion if it makes folks that mean.' I just cried and cried, and Payt whipped up the horse till he fairly flew, and first thing I knew we was at home, and Payt was lifting me out of the buggy. 'There!' he says; 'I reckon you 'll feel some bad when you are setting up there with your heathens and your harps and look down and see me in hell-fire. Good-by.' And he rode off just as hard as he could go, whipping the horse every step." Here Babe's feelings overcame her entirely, and she was unable to proceed for some time, because of the sobs that shook her.

"And to think," she finally resumed, "of all my prayers and fasting being for nothing, after all! I don't believe Payt ever did have heartfelt religion. He just got himself swept and garnished for the seven devils to come back and abide in. Oh, I feel like my heart will break."

I allowed her to cry for some time. Then I said, decidedly: "You have done wrong, Babe, and I know it. It never was intended for you to have anything to do with the heathen, and you 've just imagined you had the call. Anyhow, you are entirely too young to be a missionary, and nobody would think of

sending you, for years and years. Your first duty is at home ; and it is high time you understood it. I believe you think a great deal of Payt ; and the thing for you to do is to stay at home and help him, and stand by him in his Christian life, now you 've started him in it. If he were to backslide and get sinful again, I don't believe you 'd ever forgive yourself. Now, you think about this."

Babe shook her head, but promised.

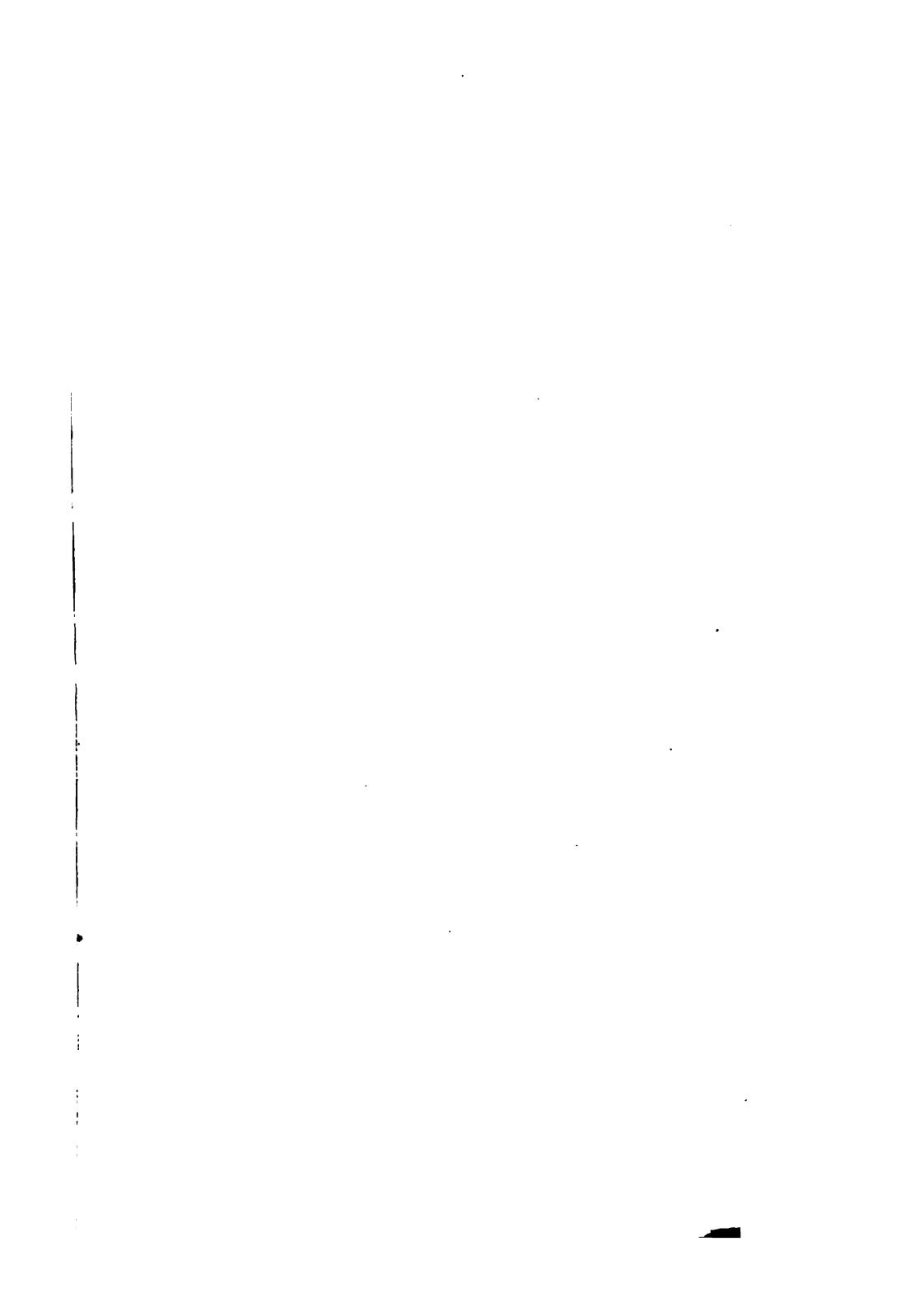
My visit came to an end in a few days. Shortly after my return home, I received the following letter :

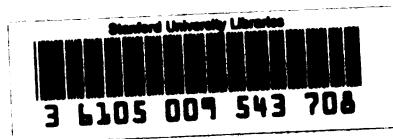
DEAR SWEET FRIEND: If you have got any Rags you don't need, please send them to me. I am making two Rag Carpets. *Don't tell.* I thought a heap about what you said, but I could n't find any Bible for it. One day I told the Lord I was just wore out trying to find the right way, and for him to show it to me plain. Then I shut my eyes and opened the Bible, and the first words I saw was " Because the Law worketh Wrath ; but where there is no Law there is no Transgression." And I commenced to see how much worse it would be for Anybody to backslide, having had the Law, than for the heathens to keep on in their Wickedness, not being under the Law.

Then I shut my eyes and opened at a new place, 2 Cor. ii, 12, "Furthermore when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit *because I found not Titus my brother*, and taking leave of them I went into Macedonia." That settled it. I knew that was just the way I would feel about Payt even if I converted *all* the heathens and his soul was n't saved; and I thought if Paul could leave the heathens for Titus, I could leave them for Payt. I wrote Payt a letter that night, and he come over Sunday. *I am cooked and done on the heathen line.* I want you to wait on me. It is coming off Christmas, the Lord willing.

Yours, truly sanctified,
BABE,
Sweetly saved
in Beulah Land.

P. S. Any kind of Rags will do.
I can dye them the color I want.





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